The Doctrinal Foundations of the Holy Eucharist and its Desecration since Vaticanum II

and how to make a Venerable Celebration of Holy Mass

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Hfst. 1

The Eucharist brought to us From Old Testament Times

Cardinal Raymond Burke (in bright red) participates in the traditional rite

What riches to receive Jesus-Host, to become ourselves a living Host, a dwelling for God who advances in our souls laden with gold, frankincense and myrrh! Gold as the image of imperishable life, frankincense of a pleasing and sacrificial walk of life, and myrrh of the medicine for our souls. This important ever-repeating event was already foretold in the Old Testament. How could it be any other way? Psalm 136:25 reads in modified punctuation: "He (Yahweh) gives all nations the bread that is Flesh." Moshje the Preacher thereby notes, referring back to Psalm 34:9: "Taste and see how good Jehovah is. For the bread He gives to all is his own Flesh. And while the taste announces bread, it is turned into Flesh."

1 – The Bread is His own Flesh

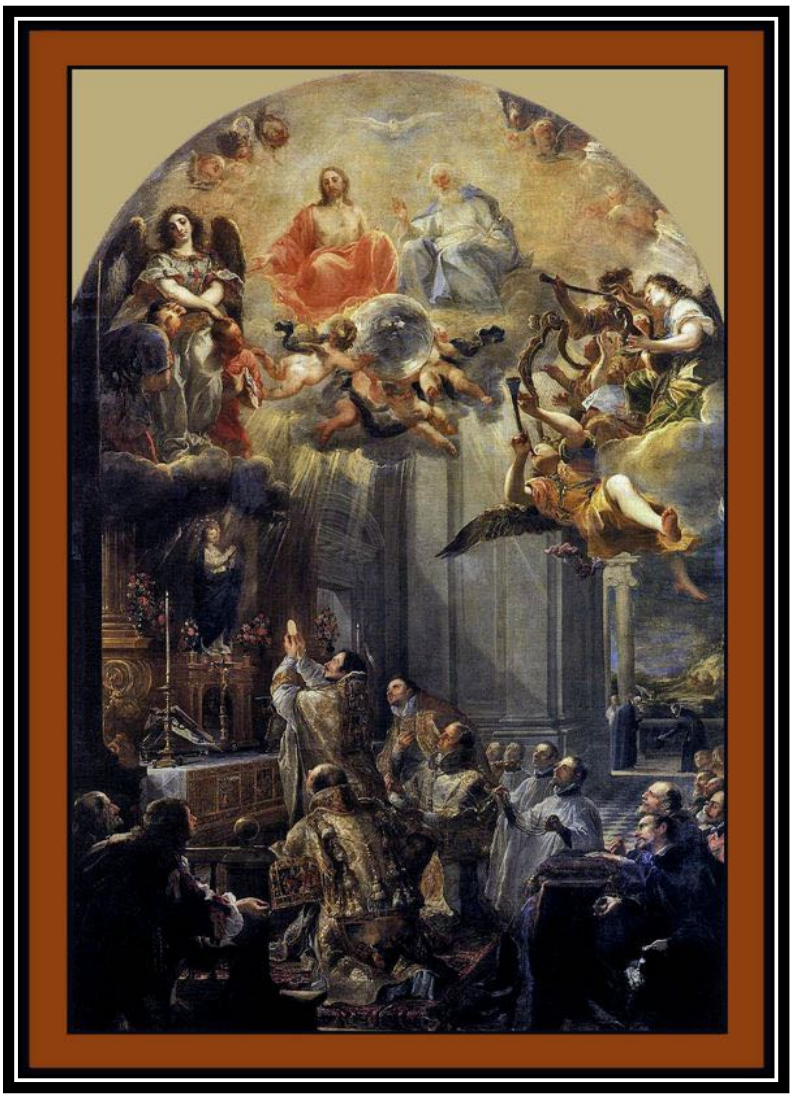
They said: *"This language repels us. Who can listen to it?"* For this reason, many of his disciples withdrew from Him. That was at the occasion of Jesus announcing the institution of the Holy Eucharist, in words admittedly difficult to grasp. He said, John 6:48-58 in paraphrase:

«« I am the living Bread that came down from heaven, not like the manna that the Israelites ate and yet they died. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. The bread that I will give is my Flesh that I will give for the life of the

> world. If you do not eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, you will not have life in you. For my Flesh is real food and my Blood is real drink. Whoever eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood remains in Me and I in him. »»

For God's Ancient People it was difficult to accept that Jesus invited them to drink his Blood, whereas on the Old Testament's prohibition they had developed a natural aversion to it. Of course, they did not know that Jesus' Blood would be brought to them in the outward form of wine. Leviticus 17:14 says: *"For the life of man and beast is his blood, and therefore I (Yaweh) have said to the Israelites to never eat the blood of man nor beast."* But since the life – the Life of Jesus Himself – is in his Blood, this is an extremely important argument for a Christian to do just that (the teaching goes that not only the wine is the Blood, but that the Host also contains traces of Christ's Blood). Acts 15:28-29 also prohibits the consumption of blood, for Christians, that is. In this instance, the consumption of the Eucharistic Blood is an exception to the rule.

Jesus said this while teaching in the synagogue of Capernaum. A little earlier, after the miraculous multiplication of bread, described in the same chapter 6 of John, it says that the Jews were murmuring about Him, because He had said: *"I am the bread that came down from Heaven.*" Jesus told this after making a comparison with the manna that kept coming down from heaven during the forty years' trek through the desert.



Fecit Juan Carreno de Miranda

The Eucharist has always been, and still is, a point of contention within the Church throughout the centuries. Faith may be beyond reason but, according to the redoubters, nothing should go against reason. So it was then and so it is now. A God who is creator, a God who is omnipotent, a loving God, a God who does miracles, yes in that we believe, but He must adhere to the limits of logic, that is, our logic. But be honest, was the manna that came down from heaven, for forty years!, within the bounds of reason? It certainly was not, as is often claimed, coriander seed, otherwise it would not have said that *"it was 'like' coriander seed"* (Num. 11:7), and if so they would not have called it manna, which in Hebrew means 'what?' Our best explanation for the Holy Eucharist is also 'what?' We don't know. It is beyond our understanding. We have a word for that: mystery. And for that Heavenly gift fits only one attitude, reverence and thanksgiving. And of course, you know that Eucharist means thanksgiving.

Obviously, the manna during the desert journey was a miracle from God, time and again. It was no ordinary bread. We have come to understand that it was the prototype of the Eucharistic bread. It is an established theological principle that the prototype is always less than its New Testament fulfillment. Even the manna was no ordinary bread, but in terms of a miracle this is vastly surpassed by the Eucharistic bread. And so it is perfectly acceptable, theologically, that the sanctified 'bread' is the transsubstantiated Body of our beloved Lord and Saviour.

The crowds that Jesus addressed the day after the multiplication of bread, consisted of the common people. In the Biblical record we see no dispute with the scribes. Not even later. Could hardly be, because the teaching about the bread being meat was not unscriptural. It is remarkable, which cannot have escaped the scribes, that the Hebrew for preaching the good news (evangelion) is the word basar (or hat-besar) which also means 'meat'. And since they taught that Hebrew is a God-given language, also spoken by the angels, they knew that this association could not be coincidental. Moreover, they must have been familiar with the reading of the "Great Hallel Psalm" (Ps. 136). Hallel is Hebrew for 'praise' and recurs in 'hallelujah' (praise the Lord).[1)] Psalm 136 was sung frequently and enthusiastically because of its simple and compelling rhythm. By punctuating the third Hebrew word in verse 25 (the punctiation is optional), the translation becomes: *"He (Yahweh) gives all nations the bread that is Flesh."* Here, Moshje the Preacher refers to Psalm 34:9, quoted in 1 Peter 2:3: *"Having tasted that the Lord is good."* And Moshe comments: *"Taste and see how good Yahweh is, for the bread He gives to all is his own Flesh. And while the taste announces bread, it is turned into Flesh."*[2)] This explains why the scribes did not challenge the Lord Jesus afterwards either. For the common public, Jesus' statement may have been too heavy an argument, not so for the educated, who can be blamed for keeping the people in the dark. Guardians of truth, they should also have been dispensers of truth. As far as the Jewish tradition is concerned, we have concentrated on the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but there is also a supporting tradition with regard to the Incarnation of God, which will not be discussed here, although the incarnation of God in a human body is equally difficult to understand as his incarnation in a small piece of bread.

It is inconceivable that Psalm 34 was not been written by King David, to which he could have found inspiration by the hymn of 1 Chronicles 16, aspects of which are also incorporated into other psalms, especially Psalms 96, 105, 106 and 117. Psalm 34 reflects a soul's delight and can only be fully appreciated by God-fearing and grateful hearts. The song begins with a threefold praise to the Holy Trinity. This is followed in six verses by a praise to the six-day work of creation followed by six more on the deliverance from Egypt, image of the demonic domination of God's work of creation. Seven verses follow on the journey through the desert on the way to the Promised Land. Humanity is now in the seventh (re)creation day (that consists of 7,000 years). This desert journey is image of that day. It ends with two verses of personal thanksgiving for the mercies received. And then comes the apotheosis with the veiled announcement of the Holy Eucharist that raises to never-ending praise. The fact that this Psalm consists of 26 verses is not accidental, for that is the numerical value of Yahweh, God's Holy Name, dwelling in his fullness in the Host.

Regarding Jesus' comment about drinking his Blood, his critics could bring to mind the remarkable ceremony during the Feast of Tabernacles at the time and consider that behind Jesus' words may have been hidden a deeper meaning. What was the case? The water from Shiloach functioned in a remarkable ceremony during the Feast of Tabernacles. Each day of the seven-day festival, water taken from Shiloach – a word that means 'the One Sent' or by implication 'the Messiah' – was solemnly placed, together with some wine, in two cups on the Temple Altar in Jerusalem and through orifices in the bottom of these cups the water and the wine were emptied out simultaneously as a libation, which was greeted as a prefiguration of the out-pouring of the Spirit of the

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1) The Hallel are those sets of psalms recited liturgically in the Jewish practice: Psalms 145-150, the so-called Daily Hallel, are recited each morning; Psalm 136, the Great Hallel, is recited on Shabbat and holidays and is part of the Passover seder. Psalms 113-118, the best-known Hallel, known more fully as the Egyptian Hallel, are recited on holidays and get their name from Psalm 114:1, which celebrates the moment "when Israel left Egypt". The hymn in 1 Chronicles 16 was sung at the inauguration of the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem. Psalm 136, on the other hand, was sung at the dedication ceremony of the Temple of Solomon. (2 Chron. 7:1-6) David will probably have written it for this occasion, although not allowed to build the Temple himself.

2) The writings of Moshje the Preacher (Mosché Ha-Darshan of Narbonne) have been lost. He is widely quoted by Rashi. To Rashi, through De Leira, we owe contemporary Christian Biblical interpretation. Le Chevalier P.L.H. Drach – the prospective chief rabbi of Paris who had converted to the Roman Catholic faith – quotes a number of sayings of Moshje the Preacher, including his Hebrew commentary on Psalm 136:25, taken from Raymond Martin's "Pugio fidei" and Petrus Galatinus' "Arcana catholicae veritatis". Moshje haDarshan/the Preacher (Hebrew: משה הדרשן) was the director of the rabbinic chool (yeshiva) of Narbonne. Though he was considered a rabbinical authority, he owes his reputation mainly to the fact that together with Tobiah ben Eliezer he was the most prominent of symbolic exegesis (derash) in the 11th century.

The Jewish scholar Rashi (1040-1105) is still one of the most esteemed exegetes of Scripture and the Talmud. He concentrated on the 'simple meaning of the Bible' with emphasis on aspects of philology, grammar and sentence structure, with the occasional insertion of a mystical exposition here and there. This marked a new trend in exegesis, and not only for Jewish circles. Through Nicolas of Lyra (1265-1349), a Franciscan monk in Paris, this approach greatly influenced Reformation and later Catholic exegesis. Lyra, who possessed an exceptionally good knowledge of the Hebrew language and Judaica, wrote the "Postillæ", which, based on the principles of Rashi, contains a detailed explanation of each Bible verse individually or group of verses. (See "Rashi and the Christian Scholars" by H. Hailperin - Pittsburgh # 1963)

Messiah. (Sukka 4:5, 4:9, 53:1) This was cause of tremendous joy. Here, Christians recognize the water and wine of the Holy Eucharist. It would come as a surprise if this Jewish ceremony had been kept up to the present day, because it would have proven too embarrassing for the Jews. In John 7:38, on Hosanna Rabba, the last day of Tabernacles, Jesus refers to Isaiah 12:3, promising the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In the Talmud (Jer. Sukka 55a) Joshua ben Levi says in his discussion of this libation: *"Why was it called place of drawing? Because from it they draw the prophetic inspiration, according to Isaiah 12:3: 'You will draw with joy from the fountains of salvation!'",* which refers also to Isaiah 8:6, a text where *"the waters of Shiloach go softly".* As for the libation ceremony of water and wine, it may well have been a remnant of an archaic rain ceremony that was customary practice in the Fertile Crescent, which significance is still attached to it in the promised Time of Nations, or Reign of Peace, addressed in Zechariah 14:17-19:

> «« No rain shall fall on the land of anyone in any country who refuses to go to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Allmighty. This horrible disaster will also strike the Egyptians [who are not dependent on rain, but on their river], and everyone else who refuses to go there for keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that do not participate in the Feast of Tabernacles. »»

2 – In the Eternal Present Tense – the way of the martyr

The observation of Moshje the Preacher regarding Psalm 34 fits perfectly well with the interpretation of the very first sacrifice mentioned in the Bible, that of Abel. To this end, Abel chose the firstborn of his lambs, the best from his stable. Now here it comes! The Hebrew for blood or meat sacrifice is korban, but for this one, only this one time, the Hebrew minchah is used, as described in Numbers 15:4: *"a flour offering mixed with oil."* The rabbis recognize that this cannot be an error in the sacred text. Therefore, it must have a deep meaning connected to it. This unique exception indicates that the Old Testament flour offering, the minchah, which each time had to be brought together with a meat offering, referred back to that one lamb that Abel had offered to God. Abel's offering, which was consumed by heavenly fire,[3)] was thus a sacrifice in the eternal present tense. Once brought, it always remained in God's mind. It required no repetition. All later minchah flour offerings would refer back to it. The korban blood sacrifices, on the other hand, which accompanied a minchah, did not point back, but forward, to that Good Friday of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, which by the application of the Blood of Jesus speaks of better things than the blood shed by Abel.

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3) Abel's sacrifice was consumed by heavenly fire, Jewish tradition teaches, as well as the Book Yasher, which is an apocryphal book, twice mentioned in the Bible. Only after the Flood did God allow meat to be eaten; thus the slaughter of livestock was foreign to Abel. Therefore, it may be assumed that he did not build an altar or kill the beast and thus did not soil his hands with blood, even from beasts. Jewish tradition reasons that he laid his lamb tied on the ground and left the rest to God. He must have thought: "God will surely deliver the lamb from its suffering, which so plaintively cries out for its mother." Because heavenly fire consumed his sacrifice, Cain knew that Abel's sacrifice was pleasing to God. Because Cain's offering remained untouched, he became angry. The Willibrord translation reads: "A wild anger seized Cain." But Cain did not deserve otherwise, for the book of Jasher tells us that he had offered inferior fruit from his field. He must have thought that it was a stupid thing to do, to just lay anything on the ground. We would say a waste of money. That God responded in this way must have surprised him. His jealous rage was not lessened by it. See also 1 Kings 18:20-39, where Elijah does an altar-test against the Baal prophets with their 450 men.

Psalm 136, the Great Hallel (hymn of praise)

(…) A solemn prayer of thanksgiving, known as the Great Hallel Psalm, is traditionally sung at the end of the Jewish Passover meal and was probably also prayed by Jesus at the Last Supper celebrated with his disciples (when He instituted the Holy Eucharist). In fact, the annotation of the Evangelists: "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives", would seem to allude to it. The horizon of praise thus appears to illumine the difficult path to Golgotha. The whole of this Psalm unfolds in the form of a litany, marked by the antiphonal refrain (26x): "… for his steadfast love endures for ever".

The many wonders God worked in human history and his continuous intervention on behalf of his people are listed in the composition. Furthermore, to every proclamation of the Lord's saving action the antiphon responds with the basic impetus of praise. The eternal love of God, is a love which, in accordance with the Hebrew term that is used here, is suggestive of fidelity, mercy, kindness, grace and tenderness. That is the unifying motif of the entire Psalm. The refrain always takes the same form, whereas the regular paradigmatic manifestations of God's love change: creation, liberation through the Exodus, the gift of land, and the Lord's provident and constant help for his people and generally for every created being.

(…) We must keep ever present in our mind the memory of the great things He has also worked in our personal lives: his mercy endures for ever. And if today I am immersed in the dark night, tomorrow He sets me free, for his mercy is eternal. Let us return to the Psalm, because at the end it returns to the Creation. The Lord, it says: **"gives food to all flesh, for his steadfast love endures for ever"**. (v. 25)

(…) The invisible power of the Creator and Lord of which the Psalm sings, is revealed in the humble sign of the bread He gives, with which He enables us to live [according to his Wil]. **And so it is that this daily bread symbolizes and sums up the love of God as Father that brings us to the fulfilment of the New Testament, to that 'Bread of Life', the Eucharist,** which accompanies us in our lives as faithful, anticipating the ultimate joy of the messianic banquet in Heaven.

Brothers and Sisters, **the lay-out of Psalm 136 made us contemplate with praise and blessing the most important stages in the history of salvation, to arrive at the Paschal Mystery in which God's saving action reaches its climax**. Let us therefore celebrate with grateful joy the Creator, Saviour and faithful Father, who "so loved the world that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life". (John 3:16) In the fullness of time, the Son of God became man to give life for the salvation of each one of us. He gave himself as bread in the Eucharistic mystery to enable us to enter his Covenant, which makes us his children. May both God's merciful goodness and his sublime "steadfast love for ever" reach far afield. I would therefore like to conclude this Catechesis by making my own, the words that St John wrote in his first letter, which we should always have in mind in our prayers: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are!" (1 John 3:1)

From the sermon of Pope Benedict XVI on October 19, 2011
to the general audience on St. Peter's Square Rome.

It has been claimed that Abel's murder is a foreshadowing of the suffering on the Cross with the fine-sounding phrase 'sacrificer and sacrifice became one', but Abel's blood did not pronounce a blessing like Jesus', but revenge in the meaning of redemption, deliverance, reconciliation or a buying back (Strong's 1350: ga'al), and as a result the

earth was cursed. Says God to Cain: *"The blood of your brother cries out to Me from the ground!"* In the root text, blood is in the plural. Therefore, a common Jewish interpolation is: *"The voices of the bloodstains of the multitude of martyrs who will come forth from Abel, your brother, cry out to Me from the earth."* This is similar to the cries of the souls under the altar in the book of Revelation: *"How long, holy and true ruler, will You delay judgment and not avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?"* (6:10) So the korban sacrifices of sustenance pointed forward, but in fact those manifold sacrifices of sustenance were only an image of that which was to come and they could not procure true atonement. We are familiar with texts like in Psalm 51 and Hosea 6,[4] where God says He does not desire sacrifices (plural form) – messianic texts that only find their fulfillment in the Son. Jesus triumphator did just that. Because of Him, the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the Mass is not a repeat offering, and yet Host means victim. (See Heb. 9:25-28 and 10:3) But because the innumerable Hosts of daily Mass offerings are inscribed as a memorial service in the eternal present tense, which also contained that one sacrifice of Abel, it is not a repeat sacrifice. In this sense, even Abel's testimony and martyrdom was not meaningless, for Christ is the king of martyrs, whose death is sanctified in Christ's martyrdom. *"Their blood is precious in His sight."* (Ps. 72:13-14) Where innocent blood flows, as Abel's did, the earth becomes holy in God's eyes. We may consecrate it post facto to the Son, Who will see to it that it is mixed with his own precious Blood.

Consecration is the change of bread and wine into the Flesh and Blood of Christ, while keeping the appearance of bread and wine. In the transsubstantiated bread God has acquired again the capacity for expiatory suffering just as 2000 years ago during his wanderings as the God-man, for God does not suffer expiatory in his glorious state or in his capacity of God only. The Catholic teaching states that God is imperturbable. I agree, but does that also mean that God cannot suffer in the Spirit, as if He were shut off from his amygdala? The answer is no, because God can and will suffer for, in and with the suffering, even in his glorified Body.[5] After all, a body always remains a body with the whole spectrum of possibilities, which are intrinsically tied to the spiritual.

The Consecration during worship is 'the same and only sacrifice' of Golgotha. It is a commemorative service, inscribed in the eternal present time. To be sure Christ has been sacrificed once, but just as the imperfect sacrifice of the old covenant of Moses made remember the sins, the sins under the New Covenant make Him remember the unique sacrifice. This recalls what psychology knows as a post-traumatic reaction. For the victims of concentration camps their one-time experience will never become past tense. Their ordeal never ends. Once a thing recalls their traumatic experience the ordeal revives, as if happening now.[6] The person is transported back to his original emotional condition, which is the typical feature of a post-traumatic stress reaction.

Because sinning is perpetual, so too Christ's sacrifice is perpetual and real – in the memorial service of the Holy Mass. The apostle Paul uses terms such as being crucified with Christ as if at present He is still being crucified and this is also in the vein of the

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4) It is interesting within the terms of our argument when God says in Hosea 6 that He desires no sacrifice, because immediately following, Adam's breaching of the covenant is mentioned. Adam's fall is like an irritating buzz that resounds throughout the entire history. So it is not far-fetched to see in the sacrifice of Abel, son of Adam, an allusion to the sacrifice of Christ.

5) As early as 1888, rhesus monkeys with a lesioned temporal brain cortex, including the amygdala (an organ shared by humans), were observed to have pronounced social and emotional deficits, which is to say that all emotions, positive and negative, belong to being a human in a bodily way, and why shouldn't the same be true for Jesus Christ, being human in its glorified state?

famous chapter three of Peter, saying: *"the just (…) being put to death in the flesh [like Christ], but [like Christ] quickened by the Spirit."* [7)] Christ's suffering and spiritual renewal, also our suffering and our renewal, are put together in one sentence. They blend into each other in a threefold way: Christ and we, his suffering and ours, his glorification and ours. And indeed, the Roman and Eastern Churches believe that each time during Consecration Christ's suffering is being renewed.

The sign of the cross, that horrible instrument of torture, has become a sign of love and power for our healing. It has become an instrument for reconciliation because the victim had the prayer of forgiveness on its lips. I fully comprehend that many despise this utter foolishness. It is so much easier to understand hatred than love. It seems… because the deepness of hatred is beyond comprehension. It is well known that exposure to a threatened death or serious injury can have a long lasting effect on the emotional well-being of the person involved, a traumatic effect that will be aggravated if the experience involves an intense feeling of helplessness. For instance: a boxer will experience a different psychological effect from injuries during a scheduled fight than a person who gets exactly the same injuries after being pounded on while being chained to a pole. The boxer may continue to live without emotional stress, while the other person, who in utter helplessness was chained to a pole, may develop a case of post-traumatic stress disorder. From this we may infer that it is always better to fight back, that means, take revenge. As concerns the second option we have seen the psychological effects on the survivors of the German extermination camps. Many of them were trapped in what we might call the gospel of vengeance. The Jewish revenge was seen as a *"holy duty",* called for in response to these atrocities.[8)]

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6) A post-traumatic reaction intervenes swiftly and wholly. This is shown by the following story. In 1997 the Dutchman Wim Alaerds set the world record of pole sitting at 51 days, which was a terrible ordeal. He tells: "I known from my personal experience that all the difficult moments return at one stroke once you start sitting on such a pole. In the beginning of 1998 I sat for three days during the Holiday fair in Utrecht. All points of pain surfaced immediately, in already the first minutes. I don't mind to have said right after my victory at the end of June 1997: 'This néver and néver again!'" (Telegraaf Daily Newspaper of 22 May 1998)

7) See 1 Pet. 3:17-18, and also Phil. 3:10-11, Kol. 1:24 & 2:12, Rom. 6:3-5 & 8:17-23, as well as 2 Cor. 4:11-14.

1 Corinthians 4:12-13 reads: *"Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat."* This is the way of the martyr who blesses, endures and entreats in favor of the aggressor 'at the very moment of aggression'. Jesus did the same while hanging on the Cross. While in the midst of being hurt we, as Christians, have the duty to forgive, to pray for and bless the agressor. That starts with a dedication of the mind and if humbly presented to God, He will see to it that it also becomes a condition of the heart. This manner also points the way to relive and reframe the bitterness of recurrent or suppressed memories of anguish in the fellowship of Christ's suffering. Isaiah 53:5 reads: *"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And with his **stripes** we are healed."* The word 'stripes' in this text is the translation of 'chaburah'. But that word can also be read as chavurah, which is found in the common greeting in Israel "Shalom Chaverim", which means so much as "Peace friends till we meet again". Shavurah means 'fellowship' and 'union'. Some have suggested therefore to render Isahiah 53:5 as: *"And by union with Him we are healed."* In the Torah Volume Three (by First Fruits of Zion) Ibn Crispin is quoted as saying that *"Although the Messiah is in the utmost distress from pain and sickness, yet by union and nearness to Him we are healed from all the diseases to which our afflictions give rise."* That accords to what the apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Philippians (3:10).

I bring to mind that at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, by the dedictive act called Consecration, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. A suitable wording for this part of the Mass reads thus: "*Take and eat of this, all of you, for this is my Body, which shall be delivered up for you. (...) Take this cup and drink from it all, for this is the Chalice of my Blood, of the New and Perpetual Covenant - Mystery of Faith - which shall be shed for you and many for the remission of sins."* This reading is in the future tense (pronounced on the eve before Good Friday), conforming to the Greek root text of, for instance, Luke 22:19. It therefore points to the crucifixion yet to come. Holy Mass is a memorial service according to the command (same verse): *"Do this in remembrance of Me."* In so doing during Mass, the faithful participate materially in what the Apostles then experienced on the eve of the sacrifice of the Cross. And therefore, the wording should be in the future tense, which was common practice in the Roman Catholic Church until World War II. Afterwards, this was 'forgotten' in many versions of the prayer. They said something like this: *"...which is shed for you and many for the forgiveness of sins."* St. Thomas Aquinas called the Consecration a *"pre-sealing"* of the sufferings of our beloved Lord and Saviour. Just as 'then', the Consecration enclosed Christ's as yet unconsummated Sacrifice and elevated it above the moment of time. So the priest, whenever he utters the Consecration words, makes the impending Sacrifice of the Cross active in our present time. Of this, the apostle Paul says: *"For whenever you eat this bread and drink from the cup, you announce the Lord's death until He comes."* (1 Cor. 11:26) The importance of this exposition is that in this way it becomes clear how our sacrifices can share in Christ's Sacrifice. At Consecration, which at each instant happens somewhere in the world, our 'little' sacrifices are benevolently introduced by Christ into his Great Sacrifice of Good Friday. It remains fundamentally Christ's Sacrifice that thus makes our own pain and suffering valuable in God's eyes and by the same token assign this to what Jesus suffered on Calvary. Of course, all this happens in the eternal present time. By focussing our attention on the cenacle of the Last Supper, and in our mind seeking the company of Jesus and his followers, this somewhat difficult language construct becomes more acceptable.

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8) The post-war avengers, who worked covertly in military brigades - actually murder squadrons, felt without exception that they were invested with a historic, national mission; that they were representing a whole people. See for that matter the well known book by Michael Bar-Zohar from 1968: "The Avengers". This shows once again that revenge is our natural inclination, no one excepted.

3 – Host more real than our delusion

Thus we perceive a continuity from the beginning – for God has always known that He was going to send his Son – a continuity up to the present time, unbroken as long as the world exists, in a line that starts from the very foundation of the world, for it is written: *"The Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world."* (Rev. 13:8) Thus, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is not an innovation that came out of nowhere, but fits within the Old Testament tradition. The priest does not repeat anything, any more than the Israelite priests did with their minchah meal offerings, but 'participates' in and through Christ with the one perpetual Mass offering of the cenacle (sacrament hall). The latter is accepted theology within the Roman Catholic Church. This is so difficult to understand! And this now constitutes the main argument why Protestants reject the Sacrifice of the Mass. *"This language repels us. Who can listen to it?"* God requires no sacrifice, no repeat sacrifice, they say, and moreover, this line of thinking goes against common sense. Indeed it does. And yet He is 'the' sacrifice, 'the' sacrament, and his suffering builds the bridge through all times. For God, time has another dimension. For us, time is the means to experience eternity, albeit in successive steps. Isn't that a wonderful thought! For God, however, time is the means to insert the eternal and infinite into one instant, into that which is bounded. It is our pettiness to claim that what we do not understand cannot be true, instead of humbly bowing our heads and realizing that our knowing is only in part. So it could well be that the Host is more real than the delusion in which we find ourselves, a delusion to be sure that God created in his mind. It is not our delusion. That's an important distinction. And that particular delusion is how we see this inordinate reality. Science may claim to have found the essence of matter being in the atomic and sub-atomic particles, but if transsubstantiation is real - which we believe - then evidently what science sees to be the 'real thing' in the cellars of the tangible, is just a perception at a deeper level than what we normally perceive, but nevertheless it remains a perception, a subjective observation, even if we use a mechanical interface, through which we observe this perception.

In theological thinking we always try to interpret from our thought constructs and limited powers of observation. In the Middle Ages that was according to the Aristotelian concept. In our time according to modern physics, which is very incomplete as a theory of reality. Rationalizing from the limited reality available to us, it is therefore conceited to want to challenge God: 'You can't do that.' 'Ha!' Scolds God from his throne.[9)] Simply put: let's not make God small by the measure of our smallness. That, too, is Jewish tradition. To close an argument, a rabbi needs only to make a plausible case that it goes back to the instruction God had given to Moses when he sojourned on Mount Sinai, which was therefore not written down but became part of the oral tradition (written down much later). By referring to Moses, the argument places itself within Judaism outside the shackles of reason. Needless to say, Jesus is more than Moses. What applies to Moses applies a forteriori to Jesus. Protestants acknowledge that the Last Supper was instituted by Jesus, but choose to believe that this was done without any formal instruction beyond what the Bible says. And that contradicts Acts 1:3 where there is mention of a continuing oral instruction by Jesus Christ himself. The Christian Church is a continuation of the synagogue, also in that respect. Both have their God-given oral tradition, and as regards the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass it is not the least.

The Roman Catholic Church has always taught that the primary or Adamic transmission through the ages is included in the Apostolic Tradition, of which she is the guardian. It is therefore of eminent concern that the celebrant, after offering the Eucharistic

9) Proverbs 16:4-5 says that a fool deserves no answer. He would one day become wise in his own eyes! In this regard, Psalm 59:8-9 is appropriate: "They belch with their mouth. Swords are in their lips, for they say: 'Who hears?' But You, O Lord, shall laugh at them. You shall have the whole band in derision."

sacrifice and praying the 'Unde et memores', immediately afterwards prays the 'Supra quæ propitio' in which there is a reference to the three great Biblical sacrificers. The 'Unde et memores', in a retrospective of God's plan of salvation, proceeds in full:

> «« Therefore, Lord, we your servants, and also your holy people, mindful of the so blessed passion of the same Christ, your Son, our Lord, and of his resurrection from the world beneath and his glorious ascension to Heaven, offer to your exalted majesty, from what you have bestowed and given, a pure victim, a holy victim, a stainless victim, the Holy Bread of eternal life and the Chalice of perpetual salvation. »» (old rite, similar to the new IA)

The 'Supra quæ propitio' that follows:

> «« Deign to look with propitious and serene countenance on them, and to accept them, **as you deigned to consider acceptable the gifts of your just servant Abel**, and the sacrifice of our Patriarch Abraham, and what your High Priest Melchizedek offered You, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim. »»

The Church thus gives witness in her liturgy that Abel's sacrifice is a prototype of the Eucharistic sacrifice, just accomplished on the altar. It is not possible to state this more clearly and formally.

4 – The later tradition

Protestants have their evening meal celebration too, and although there is no transsubstantiation of the Host into the actual Body and Blood of Christ, it is still a Christian service. It is a love meal or 'agapè' as it is sometimes referred to. Agapè fits the story of the Emmaus disciples: (Luk. 24:30-32)

> «« Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another: *"Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"* »»

The successors of the Apostles tried to find a theologically correct formulation for the great mystery of God's incarnation in the Host, which was no easy task. Hence a great variety of formulation among the Church Fathers, but basically they all meant the same thing, and that is that after the Eucharistic prayer the Lord is essentially (in substantia) present in his total sacramental reality in the manifestations of bread and wine, which to this end have had to relinquish their own being (substantia). Substantia then is the higher reality that lies behind that which we tend to call reality. This substantia is not the ordinary body, but the glorified resurrection Body of Christ, with which He could walk through walls, yet also eat ordinary food. So it is of a different substance than we are used to here on earth! It was not until the twelfth century that the Latin term 'transsubstantiatio' began to appear in theological documents. It should be mentioned that as early as in the Vulgate (Latin translation of the Bible), which came about around the year 400, the daily bread in the "Lord's Prayer" is translated as the *"panem nostrum **supersubstantialem**"* instead of 'panem nostrum quoditianum'. Transsubstantiatio was officially put into use at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the groundwork for which had been layed at the Sixth Council of Rome in 1079 in response to the conflict with Berengarius. The enemies of the Church pretend that new doctrines are invented at councils. Nothing could be further from the truth. A council confirms through an official college that which had long lived within the Church and gives its seal of approval to it on the basis of theological arguments. That is how it also worked in this case.

How did St. Jerome (Eusebius) arrive at that highly unusual Latin term for 'daily' in his translation of the Vulgate, which is strikingly similar to the 'transubstantiatio' of 700 years later? The Vulgate was not just any translation, but Jerome was urged to do so by Pope Damasus, who wanted a Latin version of the Bible in 'more accurate' Latin that matched the 'everyday language'. The only correct conclusion is that the original word is also highly unusual. The Greek 'epiousios' is used exclusively for the "The Lord's Prayer" (Mt. 6:11, Lk. 11:3) and occurs nowhere else in Greek literature. The definitive French edition (1998) of the authoritative Catechism of the Catholic Church (the CCC) states under No. 2837 that 'epiousios' can be understood in three ways: in the pedagogical sense, in the qualitative sense, and finally in the literal sense, which is then translated as 'super-essential', which (according to the CCC) *"points directly to the Bread of Life, the Body of Christ, the medicine to immortality, without which we lack life in ourselves."* There is also, of course, the manna of the Living Word, the Sacred Scripture. But for ús, who take refuge in the Bread of Life, it is certainly true that without that gift we lack life in ourselves. And just as the manna descended daily from heaven in wafers, which was essentially supernatural, so it is with the Bread of Life, our daily bread. The CCC quotes Augustine, an exact contemporary of Jerome, who says: *"The Eucharist is our daily bread. As for the manna, with which the people of Israel were fed during their trek through the desert, it is written: 'It (...) tasted like wafers (or hosts) with honey. (...) Take an urn of manna and put it before the Lord (in the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting), to preserve it for our posterity.'"* (Ex. 31:31-33) Interesting.

The technique of transsubstantiation, if I may call it that, is closely related to Jesus' incarnation as a human being and the latter, in turn, is related to Jesus' incarnation in the universe.[10)] An inference from this is that if a priest does not believe in the true, real and substantial presence of God under the discernible forms of bread and wine, he will therefore also begin to doubt Christ's divine presence in the form of his human body, for if the greater cannot lead to the lesser, neither can the lesser lead to the greater. Despite the foregoing, God is separate from his creation. Jesus as the firstborn is one with creation, but that does not mean that creation and God are identical. After all, God is more than creation. It appears that the general can lead to the specific without detracting from God's fullness and indivisibility. The prayer during the Sanctus, following Isaiah 6:3 and the Psalms 19:1 and 72:19, is as follows: *"Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory."* The letter to the Colossians says it beautifully:

> «« [God's beloved] Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, powers or rulers or authorities. All things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him

10) God's acts of creation and God's incarnation relate to God, manifesting Himself 'outside' Himself without affecting his fulness 'inside' Himself. This divine self-limitation is designated in Chasidism as 'tzimtzum' or self-confinement and also as 'becoming concrete'. That possibility causes beings to become self-existent and autonomous. The non-Chasidic Jew sees it differently and thinks to know that it is impossible for the infinite God to enter into self-confinement, an approach that creates an unbridgeable expanse with Catholicism. However, if God could not enter into confinement, it is difficult to see how He could create something separate from Himself, for in the beginning when the beginning was not yet there, there was nothing outside of God. In the process of creation He creates something separate from Himself and in a lower realm (except for the Holy Trinity and the Son), yet remains always aware of everything, that is to say, remains part of it in one way or another. Even the tiniest movements of his creatures is known to Him, and if that movement or thought is not according to his Holy Will, it causes God to suffer and reach out in mercy in order to correct, if the creature allows Him to, because only perfection can satisfy the true almighty God, because He is perfection Himself.

> all things hold together. He is also the head of the body, the Church. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, that He might be first in all things, He alone. For God was pleased to have 'all the fullness' (consequently: infinity) dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, I say, whether beings on earth or in heaven, by making peace through his Blood that was shed on the Cross. »» (Col. 1:15-20)

This points to Jesus' presence always and everywhere. Therefore, the phenomenon of transsubstantiation is not entirely new or unique, but as a specific and excessive expression of God's Love, it can never be adequately praised. While man normally stands in the infinity of God, through Holy Communion the infinity of God comes into us! (until the Host is consumed) What an unfathomably magnificent event!

There is also a form of incarnation in the body of the Church, that is, in all believers together, according to Paul's word: *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the Body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."* (1 Cor. 10:16-17)

The creation of some random person from nought, that is, according to the image that God has in mind of that particular person and in which image he is being called, can be compared to aforementioned creation process, since hére too this human being was created in God's image. Despite all the frantic attempts to ruin that image, we are and remain, in Christ Jesus, God's creation. (Eph. 2:10) So let's see what insights the creation and generation process, as revealed in the Old Testament, provides.

5 – What did the early Christians say and do?

The belief of Christ's Real Presence in the consecrated bread and wine went relatively undisturbed during the first millennium. Let's see what some early Christians thought, keeping in mind that we can learn much from them about how the New Testament should be understood. After all, they are closest to the source of our faith.

It is recorded that Pope Saint Sixtus (115-125) issued a letter, stating: *"That it is prohibited for the faithful to even touch the sacred vessels, or receive (the Host) in the hand",*[11)] which testifies that the faithful believed in the Real Presence from the beginning onset. And what is true of the holy vessels is a fortiori true of the Holy Host. Saint Basil the Great (330-379), one of the four great Eastern Fathers, considered Communion in the hand so irregular that he did not hesitate to consider it a grave fault. (Letter 93) And so at the Council held at Saragozza (380), it was decided to punish with excommunication anyone who dared to continue the practice of Communion in the hand. The Council of Constantinople (692) followed the decree of the Council of Saragozza and prohibited the faithful from administering communion to each other in groups. It decreed, furthermore, that an excommunication of one week's duration would follow for those who would do so in the presence of a bishop, priest or deacon. In 1551, at the 13th session (Ch. 8), the Council of Trent in 1551 reaffirmed that the faithful receive the Sacrament from the hand of the priest, which, according to the same Council, was sanctioned by the illustrious example of our Lord Himself, who, with his own hands, consecrated and gave to his disciples, his most sacred Body.[12)]

Ignatius of Antioch was a disciple of the Apostle John and wrote a letter to the Smyrnaeans around the year 100. In it he referred to them who held heterodox opinions, that

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11) In almost identical terms, this was confirmed at the Council of Trent, session 13 ch. 8. I have not been able to find the original reference to the statement of Sixtus I.

"they keep away from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in his goodness, raised up again." This text is, outside Scripture, one of the oldest testimonies about the Eucharist, perhaps the oldest. The Gospel leaves little room for doubt. Does not the Apostle Paul say unequivocally: *"Does not the cup of blessing that we bless give communion with the Blood of Christ? Does not the bread we break give fellowship with the Body of Christ? Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, sins against the Body and Blood of the Lord. He who eats and drinks without recognizing the Body, eats and drinks his own judgment."* (1 Cor. 10:16, 11:27, 29)

Faithful, who after the Second Vatican Council receive the Sacred Host from the hands of a priest in their hands and do so because they are fully convinced that it is permitted by the Church and because it has become a general practice, those people are not in sin, provided they are fully convinced. However, if they have even the slightest doubt about whether it is right, but are not willing to listen to their conscience, then they are passing judgment on themselves. A layman can become a Eucharistic minister after his hand has been consecrated in a special ceremony, but this is borne out of necessity, because it is much preferable that a priest goes to the sick in order to distribute the Species.

Some forty years after Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr wrote: (Apology I 66:1-20)

> «« Not as common bread or common drink do we receive these things; but since Jesus Christ our Saviour was made incarnate by the Word of God and was both Flesh and Blood for our salvation, so too, as we have been taught that the food has been made into the Eucharist by the Eucharistic prayer, set down by Him, a transformation by which our own blood and flesh is nourished (…) [because it] is both the Flesh and the Blood of that incarnated Jesus. »»

We should not forget to mention Tarcisius, a lad of about twelve years old, who is known as the 'boy-martyr of the Eucharist'. He did not write about the Eucharist, but acted on his unshakeable belief in the real transsubstantiated presence of our Lord. He is the first notable martyr for defending the Eucharistic Body. One day in the year 225 he was carrying the Eucharistic Body in the appearance of bread on his way to prisoners in the great town of Rome. While on the Appian Road he met strangers who asked him what he was carrying, suspecting he was a Christian. He deemed it a shameful thing to cast pearls before the swine and kept quiet. And so he was assaulted with clubs and stones until he gave up the ghost. His friends took up his body and buried it with honour in the Callistus Cemetery. In his poem, Pope Damasus compares this Tarcisius with Stephan the Martyr of the book of Acts, who was taken away and stoned by the Jews after he had given them a wonderful sermon in the synagogue, arguing that the Temple service was now being replaced by the new cult, represented by the Eucharist, although the last he did not mention in precise terms. The Pope praised Tarcisius for suffering a cruel death rather than surrender *"the divine Body to raging dogs"*. Saint Tarcisius is seen as a model for altar boys and as an example of loving and heroic devotion to our Lord, who is really, that is substantial, present in the Holy Eucharist.

We also have the Church historian Eusebius, who lived from 263 to 339. He meticulously recorded what he observed without elaborating on it. He is therefore considered rather boring, but that precisely increases his reliability. This Eusebius writes:

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12) I would like to add that allowing to receive Communion in the hand, as has now become common practice, is also wrong because it makes it easy for Satanists to appropriate the Holy Host for their black masses and the like.

«« We children of the New Covenant celebrate our Passover every Sunday. We are constantly fed with the Body of the Saviour and each time with the Blood of the Lamb. Every Sunday we are strengthened with the sanctified Body of that same redeeming Paschal Lamb and our souls washed in his precious Blood. »»

Origen said in a homily on Exodus 13:3, somewhere in the middle of the third century, attesting his belief in the real presence of Christ:

«« You are accustomed to take part in the divine mysteries. So you know how, when you receive the Body of the Lord, to reverently exercise every care lest a particle of it fall and lest anything of the consecrated gift perishes. You account yourselves guilty, and rightly so, if any of it be lost through negligence. »»

Cyril of Jerusalem said in a discourse in the middle of the 4th century, in his Catechetic Discourses 4:22:9 :

«« Do not, therefore, regard the bread and wine as simply that, for they are, according to the Master's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ. Even though the senses suggest otherwise, let faith make you firm. Do not judge by taste, but be fully assured by faith, not doubting that you have been deemed worthy [to partake in] the Body and Blood of Christ. »»

Statue of St. Tarcisius in the Musée Quai d'Orsay, Paris
The first Martyr for the Eucharist!

It is striking what Ephraim the Syrian, who died at Edessa in 373, manages to tell us in his Hymn of Praise to Faith:

«« Do not believe that this bread and wine that you have before you will remain what they were. Nay, my brother, believe nothing of it. Through the prayers of the priest and through the intervention of the Holy Spirit, the bread becomes Body and the wine becomes Blood. Since God has willed that the most venerable Word be born as a human, could He not have wrought that the bread become his own Body, and the wine the Blood of Christ? »»

This comment by Ephraim the Syrian is fascinating. Tell me, what is harder to understand, that God has been incarnated in a human body or in a Host? Personally, I have equal difficulty from my logically thinking mind to believe in one or the other. So I prefer to believe both, and this is also based on what Jesus himself said and did and as has been recorded by reliable witnesses from earliest times. Finally I quote from a fifth century homily of Theodore of Mopsuestia, which shows that the controversy is not new:

«« When Christ gave the bread He did not say: 'This is the symbol of my Body', but: *"This is my Body"*. In the same way, when He gave the cup of his Blood, He did not say: 'This is the symbol of my Blood', but: *"This is my Blood"*, for He did not want us to look upon the [Eucharistic gifts], after having received them by grace by the coming of the Holy Spirit, according to their nature, but wanted us to receive them as they are, that is to say as the Body and Blood of our Lord. »» (Catech. Hom. 5:1)

It is only at the end of the first millennium that doubts were expressed as concerns the real presence of Christ in the consecrated figures, written down by a certain monk Ratramnus († ca 870). In the erupting controversy Ratramnus' teaching was condemned at the Synod of Vercelli in 1150. At the same time the Greek Church defended the long held belief in the dispute against Sotericus. That happened at the Synod of Constantinople in 1156 and 1157. The official doctrine was formulated at the Councils of Lateran IV (1215) and Trent (1551), adhering to a long held tradition.

We could be accused of incompleteness if we did not mention the crisis surrounding belief in the 'real presence', which was set in motion in the person of Berengarius of Tours (ca. 999-1088), a leading figure of his day whose excessive intellectualism led to many doubts about the doctrine of the Eucharist. Great upheaval ensued over this, with Berengarius at times yielding to pressure to revoke his opinions and at others not. Berengarius denied the possibility of a substantial change in the elements of bread and wine and refused to admit that Christ's Body is concretely present on the altar. His argument was that Christ cannot be brought from Heaven to Earth before the Last Judgement. He maintained that the Body of Christ, which exists only in Heaven, is operative for humanity through its sacramental counterpart or symbol and therefore Christ is not in reality in the Eucharist except, as he said, as an ideal. Pope Gregory VII ordered Berengarius to subscribe to a statement of faith, which became the cornerstone of Eucharistic piety. It was the Church's first definitive statement of what had always been believed, but not always so clearly understood. It is a declaration of faith in the Eucharist as an unquestionable objective and undivided reality, which Berengarius signed in 1079: [13)]

«« I, Berengarius, believe in my heart and openly profess that the bread and wine that are placed on the altar are through the mystery of the sacred prayer and the words of our Redeemer, substantially changed into the true and proper life-giving Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ our Lord;[14)] and that after the Consecration it is the true Body of Christ, who was born of the Virgin, as an offering for the salvation of the world hung on the Cross, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and is the true Blood of Christ which flowed from his side; not only through the sign and power of the sacrament but in his proper nature and true substance; as it is set down in this summary and as I read it and you understand it. Thus it is that I believe, and I will not teach any more against this faith. So help me God for this holy gospel of God! »»

6 – God's overwhelming Love remains unrequited

I used to have some resentment because Jesus had ascended to Heaven. I thought, nice God is that, who leaves me with misery! Until I realized that He did not leave us as orphans. In frenzied and extreme folly of Love, the God who made the Heaven and the Earth, created Himself through the perishable matter of a little bread and wine, in order to be Life for each of us in this extraordinary way. For enemies are many, vicious wiles and traps besiege his followers everywhere, the passions, the weaknesses… Surprisingly Joseph and Mary are drawn into great poverty on their flight to Egypt, even though they got gold, frankincense and myrrh from the three kings. Were they robbed? The mystical literature is unanimous: Joseph and Mary handed those treasures right back out, because earthly wealth did not count. After all, they were richly endowed, richer than King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, the richest man at the time of this writing. They owned the king of kings and creator of the universe. And so they had no problem handing out all those gifts. What riches to receive Jesus-Host, to become a living Host, a dwelling for God, who wanders into our souls laden with gold, frankincense and myrrh! Gold as the image of imperishable life, frankincense of a pleasing and sacrificial walk of life, and myrrh to cure our souls. With the same generosity that was peculiar to Joseph and Mary, we seek to distribute these gifts to those around us.

We should realise that our present time, following in chronological order the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, is no end in itself. The Host, fruit of the sacrifice on the Cross, is meant to prepare a body for God, a people 'in' God. Marie-Julie Jahenny confides the following to one of the brothers Chardonnier on April 26, 1880: [15)]

> «« By marrying his Cross, Jesus made a completely resplendent covenant. He made it by his own suffering and after that he transfigurated it – which is an all-embracing transformation – with the delights he receives from his Father in his eternal reign. These delights are a thousandfold richer and more abundant than the sufferings from which they ensue, and are to be fully revealed in a glorious era yet to come. »»

Unfortunately, throughout history, God's overwhelming Love has been met with overwhelming ingratitude and scandalous sins. Instead of offering good thoughts when the Host is distributed, one is absent-minded and thinks of something else entirely. When one prays, it is done superficially and with insufficient confidence. Worse, some approach the altar while burdened with grave sins and have not seen fit to go to confession of them. Moreover, how many Masses have not been celebrated unworthily over time? There are also those who receive the Host for the sole purpose of offending God in ways I prefer not to comment on. Despite the tsunami of indifference and hatred, God's Love is unstoppable, and nothing holds it back. This is quite simply the hallmark of Love. It is this aspect that stuns me, that puts all God's miracles in the shade.

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13) Once back in France after his confession of 1079, Berengarius of Tours published his own account of the discussions in Rome with which this confession was essentially revoked. This led to another trial in 1080 conducted by a synod at Bordeaux, with an other undersigned confession. After this he kept silent and retired to the island of Saint Cosmo near Tours, where he spent his days in ascetic solitude. There he died eight years later, in union with the Church, as the narrative tells.

14) It says 'flesh and blood', not 'the whole body', as if it were a miniature Christ. And indeed Eucharistic miracles seem to indicate that the Host is the flesh (and blood) of Christ's heart.

15) "Le Ciel en Colloque avec Marie-Julie Jahenny" (The Heaven in consultation with Marie-Julie Jahenny) by Pierre Roberdel – Ed. Résiac, Montsûrs # 1982; cf. the revelations to a certain Lucie in "Le Grand Message de la Croix, 1981-1984" (The great message of the Cross) - Téqui, Paris # 1991.

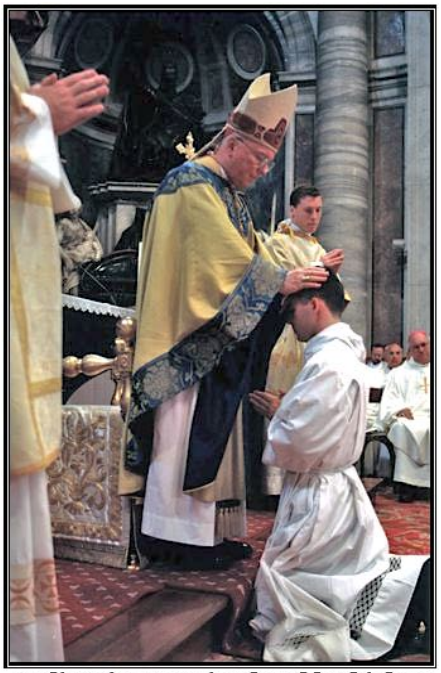
Ch. 2

PRIESTHOOD NOT MADE UP OF CIVIL SERVANTS

SOW THE WIND AND REAP THE WHIRLWIND

7 – Called to be a priest, or is he a civil servant?

As noted elsewhere in this journal, the heads of the Dominican province in the Netherlands, with its headquarters in Nijmegen, published the brochure "The Church and the Ministry" in the autumn of 2007 and distributed it to approximately 1,400 Dutch parishes. At the same time and English-language version was sent out via the usual news media. At present (Febr. 2008) it is also available in French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. We could say that this represents a well-prepared media offensive! A withdrawal or something of a measure of tolerance towards a more correct Roman Catholic viewpoint it would not seem a justifiable expectation. The intention behind the piece is clear: the priest has to become a civil servant, an official. The writers of this 38-page brochure are the Dominicans André Lascaris, Jan Nieuwenhuis, Harrie Salemans and Ad Willems. Lascaris was the best known. For almost twenty years he was involved in the Irish Peace Movement and has published a great deal on that subject. Thereafter he was associated with Dominican Study Centre for Theology and Society in Nijmegen.



Ordination to priesthood by bishop

The problem dealt with by the writers is very serious and everyone shares in their burning care regarding the crisis in the Church. The solution they propose is that of the

demolition hammer: the old must make way for the new. Because of the alarming lack of priests, whereby many parishes can scarcely function in the present system, a solution is sought in what is called the *"centre for faith and spirituality"*. The bishop would be obliged to ordain into the 'office' candidates for the priesthood emerging from a centre such as this. The brochure speaks deliberately of an upside-down pyramidal structure and - how otherwise? - refers to the decisions and discussions of Vatican II (1962-1965), a Council that by its interpretation contradicts all previous Councils in our church history of the last two thousand years! The proposal shows a terrible lack of historical insight, of which more later. The decisions of the Council must be seen in their entirety and one does need to read what it says. The brochure decrees that if the bishop refuses to lay his hands on the proposed candidate, then (and it really does state this): ***"the parishes may be confident that they are able to celebrate a real and genuine Eucharist when they are together in prayer and share bread and wine."***

Holy Week Hongkong, 9 April 2007: H. Mass with nearly 200 priests and 2 bishops

By way of conclusion, the Dominican brothers say the following:

> «« The present shortage of priests is frankly unnecessary and therefore unreal. In any present-day parishes men and women are active in a heart-warming and stimulating way as persons who initiate and inspire communities in a way adapted to our time, as Christians people can identify with. (…) Is it true to say that in our Western society unmarried people are per se more suitable to be leaders of a faith community than married ones? And that in our Western cultural pattern men are per se more suitable to lead and inspire a Christian community than women are? Our answer, and that of very many fellow faithful, to both questions is an unequivocal 'no' (…) The official church authority in principle opts for a protection of the priesthood in its present form over against the right of church communities to the Eucharist; in the official view using the approved eucharistic prayers and especially pronouncing the words of institution not only is more important than the faith community, but is also seen and used as an exclusive power which is restricted to ordained priests. »»

8 – Heritage from the roaring sixties

It comes as no surprise that it just happens to be the Netherlands where this document has seen the light of day. The matter landed on a slippery slope under Cardinal Alfrink. He was archbishop during an important juncture in time, from 1955 to 1975. He held Modernist opinions according to which the supernatural was giving way more and more to the emancipation of mankind, the starting point, measure and aim of the economy of salvation. Here the vertical gives way to the horizontal, and that is what they dare call economy of salvation! Alfrink strove to build into the ecclesiastical structure the Dutch polder model, based on wide-ranging discussions and room for compromise, as used on the political field of play. The changes he sought to introduce had to do with binding interventions by the faithful in ecclesiastical matters, far-reaching liturgical innovations, a great deal of free thinking in ethical questions such as contraception, abortion and euthanasia, and, of course, the question of celibacy. And though there were more rebellious church provinces in Europe in those turbulent years, the Netherlands stood out because of the unity shown by its bishops and the support of the large community of faith, taken for granted. In addition, the continual hammering of the Press put the whole thing out of joint.

De verandering van brood en wijn in het vlees en bloed van Jezus

The year 1970 marked the turning point, yet not a final one. From then on the Vatican took the reins in hand again is such matters as episcopal appointments. This is described in great detail in the booklet by iconoclast Walter Goddijn: “Kardinale kwesties in Katholiek Nederland 1970-1987” (Cardinal Issues in Catholic Netherlands). The author experienced everything at close quarters in his capacity as adviser to the bishops. He makes no secret of his distaste for the papal actions. The cover of his book carries the following passage: *“Much of the present misery within the Catholic Church, including the serious shortage of priests, could have been avoided, according to the author, if the central authority of Rome had adopted in 1970 the standpoints of the Dutch bishops, under the leadership of Cardinal Alfrink, regarding the obligatory celibacy of priests.”* No doubt this small volume was put on the obligatory reading list at Nijmegen’s recalcitrant theological faculty! Rome tried to turn the tide, but it was too little and too late, as shown by the Church & Ministry initiative. Monsignor Giuseppe Beltrami, Internuncio from 1959 to ‘67, warned my father, then Dutch Foreign Minister, that major problems were awaiting the Dutch church. He had come to this conclusion after analysing the teaching at seminaries in the Netherlands and what the influential Dominican Edward Schillebeeckx (1914-2009) and his like were teaching at the theological faculty in Nijmegen.[16)]

Edward Schillebeeckx

My father was a good friend of Beltrami's, for he and his family went to Mass at the Nuntiature every Sunday. That made for good contacts within the Vatican. In 1980, when my father was Secretary General of NATO, he intervened in the imminent separation of the Spanish Prince Carlos Hugo of Bourbon-Parma from Irene Lippe-Biesterfeld (sister of Queen Beatrix). Cardinal Alfrink was planning to annul the marriage, which would mean a de facto dissolution. When my father got wind of this, he immediately contacted the Pro-Nuntius Bruno Wüstenberg and advised him to have Rome intervene to tell Alfrink that a statement about the validity of the marriage laid outside his jurisdiction, because it had taken place in Rome, in the Santa Maria Maggiore (a beautiful basilica!), and that it thus fell under the jurisdiction of Rome. Which is the reason why Alfrink failed to get his way.[17)]

Noticeable in this Schillebeeckx caricature from 1980 by the artist David Levine, is that the Belgian Father Schillebeeckx is wearing an ordinary man's suit, giving expression to the wish on the part of many priests to be a simple human being among human beings. A priest may be someone with simple human traits, but that no more makes him an ordinary human among humans than is Queen Beatrix because of her royal function. Testimony of Gloria Polo from Columbia, carrying her testimony with the permission of the Bishop of Bogota: *"Who did you think you were, making yourself God and judging My anointed ones? They are 'human', and the holiness of a priest is built by his community, that prays, loves, and supports him. When a priest sins, his community is questioned, not him."* (gloriapolo.net)

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16) Enfant Teriible Edward Schillebeeckx O.P. has not always been progressive. Brilliant as he was, by the time he was 29 he was lecturing on Thomism at the University of Louvain, surely not a subject that would appeal to Modernists. In 1958 he was appointed professor at the University of Nijmegen. Although there were already clear signs of a turn-around, the break with traditional Christian faith was not definitive until Schillebeeckx's critical review of John A.T. Robinson's book (1963): "Honest to God". His review unleashed a storm of criticism, apparently too much for his sensitive nature, and he wrote a new review under the title "Honest to Robinson". In "Honest to God" Robinson proposes abandoning the notion of a God 'out there', existing somewhere out in the Universe as a 'Cosmic supremo'. Didn't we abandon the idea of God 'up there', that fits the notion of the old man up in the sky? In its place, he offered a frankly and openly atheistic reinterpretation of God, whom he defined as Love, spelled with a capital 'L'. (pp. 63, 75, 105, 115-116, 127, 130) My aunt Agnes Luns, my grandfather's sister, was a sort of Golda Meir-like figure, but then representing traditional Catholic faith. As city councillor in Amsterdam she was well able to stand her ground. Her opponent was Mrs. Weissmuller (from the socialist PvdA), who was also a strong woman. At one point Agnes asked a question of Schillebeeckx, after he had just given a lecture. "But Madam", he answered, "you can't say that!!" "Ohh!" my aunt replied with her sonorous Luns-voice and to the great hilarity of the audience: "So that's what you think? Well, then, I'll say it again!"

17) According to the Roman Catholic Church an eccliastical marriage can only be dissolved by the death of one of the spouses; but a marriage can be declared invalid or annulled if at the time of the marriage the conditions of marriage were not fulfilled, for instance, if one of the partners was still married to someone ecclesiastically or if a notarial deed was signed beforehand stating that the marriage vow was made under duress, as in 1955 by Princess Irene von Fürstenberg, then 15 years old. A separation of table and bed can be granted, but the partners cannot remarry with each other and only to another after the former partner has died.

Footnote from the editor of the journal "The Burning Lamp" in which this article appeared at the time:

> «« In our circles too, action in the direction of Rome was taken at the time. Our first chairman, ex-parliamentarian Klaas Beuker, had received inside information on the plan to declare Princess Irene's marriage invalid. Together – Klaas Beuker and myself (Jan Leechburch Auwers, Beuker's closest colleague) – we visited various Curial bodies in Rome to find out more about the matter. On our side the particular emphasis was placed on the fact that when it comes to persons of royal blood, any rulings regarding an invalidation belong to papal pregoratives and not those of the local bishop. »»

Down in adoration falling,
Lo! the sacred Host we hail;
Lo! o'er ancient forms departing,
Newer rites of grace prevail;
Faith for all defects supplying,
Where the feeble senses fail.

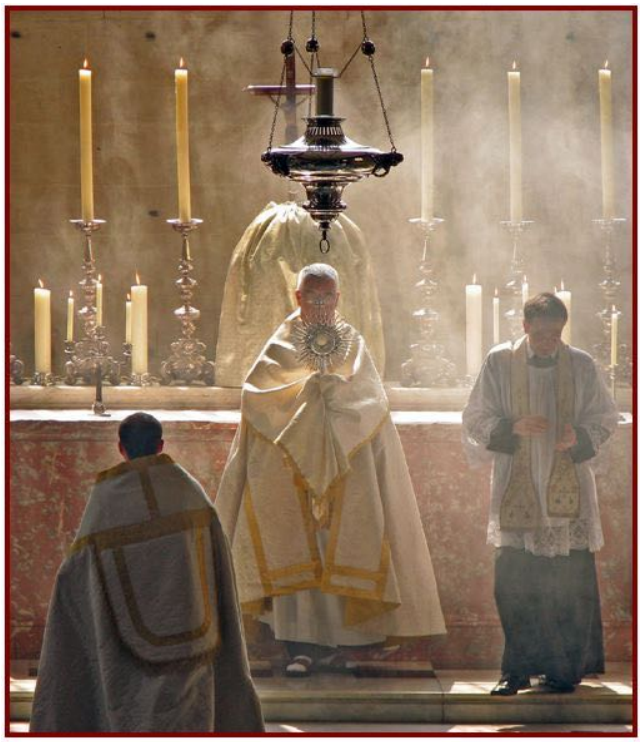
An important eclipse happened when a radical group within the Dutch Church Province, called Platform, organised a meeting on the 8th of May 1980. Ever since it called itself the '8th of May movement'.[18] This group was devoted to the political, social and theological commitment of how could it be otherwise: Father Schillebeeckx. So, on the 8th of May forty people convened to mount a fight against the decisions of the Special Synod of Dutch Bishops, that were ratified on January 31st in Rome's Sistine Chapel. The central theme then concerned the position of laymen, priests and deacons within the Church. The 8th of May movement was backed by a large following and wanted the democratization of the Church; the base would henceforth be acting as the sole decision power effectively putting aside both bishops and the Pope. One of the burning questions was intercommunion. Decision 46 of the Special Synod states: *"Intercommunion between separated brothers is not the answer to Christ's appeal for perfect unity."* It is meaningful that the Dominican Father Oostvogel ostentatiously protested this directive on occasion of the marriage ceremony of Prince Maurits with a Catholic girl on May 30, 1998, that was seen life on national TV by a very large audience. In the eighties Oostvogel acted as vice-president of the 8th of May movement. At this marriage the Eucharist was in a Dutch Reformed church (sic!) and when he invited everyone to communion a few Protestant members of the Royal House responded, like former Queen, Princess Juliana. This caused a stir under church leaders of Protestant denomination as well as the little group of faithful in the country. The daily ever repeating practice of Eucharist is so vital to the experience of faith of a priest, that a priest who is deliberately denying the real presence of the Lord in the host – which is something different than doubting – also denies the divinity of Christ.[19]

9 – The Desacralization of the City of God

There is talk of a schismatic movement that has been set in motion. A schism implies a split in the Church, and what is going on here is much worse. In earlier times, the heretics themselves withdrew from the Church in order to establish a church of their

18) On Nov. 21, 2003, the 8th-May Movement was deemed irrelevant and officially discontinued. What transpired: its constituency had dwindled due to ongoing secularization and ageing.

own, knowing full well that Holy Mother Church would immediately reject them. But at present they want nothing more than to remain within. The Roman Catholic Church is the oldest institution on earth. That lends status, power. Even more: the rebellious priests want to be ordinary people who are members of an ordinary human association, but not outside Rome. Priests are, indeed, ordinary mortals, but they do have a special function and are equiped thanks to their special ordination, that indelible sign that makes them recognisable even in Hell. The rebels wish to remove utterly the dividing wall between profane and sacral. In earlier times, the pagans humbly worshipped idols and because of that stood on a higher plane than what is now going on. The 'God is dead' mentality has desacralised the Eucharist, and thus the poison has entered the heart even of the Mystical Body. This is achieved by turning the All Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus into an ordinary fraternal meal in memory of the one brother, the 'man' Jesus Christ, who has left us an example. Thus it has become, literally, a simple meal of bread, clothed in good intentions. What a miserable sort of belief! The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament has thus completely disappeared, which can only lead to a further erosion of the Church …and that under the guise of freedom, brotherly love and tolerance. The divine revelation is reduced to a human level, deprived of its mysticism and supernatural nature. Since the 1950s the parishes have trodden the path of mediocrity, arriving at indifference regarding both the celebration of and the attendance at Holy Mass. Finally, we have reached a point of total disdain for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. That is the stage we are at now.



On Sunday 10 June 2007, the Feast of Corpus Christi, Catholics of Oxford took part in a Eucharistic Procession from the Oxford Oratory to the Catholic Chaplaincy, pausing at Blackfriars Priory for a sermon given by Bishop William Kenney CP, auxiliary of Birmingham.
Photo O.P. Lawrence

19) An article published in English on this type of development is by Michael Gilchrist in 1988: "The Post-war Crisis in the Dutch Church until the Eighties – The Dutch Experiment: growth of a New Church".

There remains the hatred whereby others are prevented from adoring the Sacrament, even if only on the feast of Corpus Christi, especially known as Blessed Sacrament Day. The Latin name is: "Dies Sanctissimi Corporis et Sanguinis Domini Iesu Christi" (Day of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus Christ the Lord). It is celebrated on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday to commemorate the institution of the Holy Eucharist on Holy Thursday. And as we know, Trinity Sunday falls on the first Sunday after Whitsun. Blessed Sacrament Day was instituted in 1246, on the intercession of a Belgian nun, by the Bishop of Liège, and 65 years later was confirmed by a general council. The feast is accompanied by a solemn procession. Martin Luther said in his sermon No. 1521, referring to the solemn procession going through the streets: *"I am to no festival more hostile than this one.*" which, because it comes from his mouth, is a strong recommendation to do just that. Thomas Aquinas wrote a beautiful liturgy for the feast. The feast of Corpus Christi was needed at the time because the adoration owed to Jesus had fallen into severe neglect. To strengthen the faith, they seized this means of public adoration of the Body of God in the form of the Holy Host. Let the faithful Christians take this feast seriously in order to bring about a restoration in place of the failure to recognise the immense font of mercy that is the Blessed Sacrament, and also of the related insults and malpractices offered to the Giver, He who above all gives Himself. In the message of the Book of Truth of Jan. 18th 2012, Mary, the Mother of Salvation, says: *"You insult my son when you receive the Holy Eucharist in the hand."*

10 – A piece of déjà-vu

The amazing thing about the Church & Ministry initiative is that it is a resurrection of "La constitution civile du clergé" (The civil Constitution of the Clergy), though now proceeding from the bosom of the Church itself. This piece of legislation was passed by the French parliament on 12th July 1790 (less than a year following the storming of the Bastille). This was to be the anvil on which papist belief was to be broken: *écraser l'infâme*! (crush the infamy). It was supposed to be an administrative ruling, as is also suggested to us by the authors of Church & Ministry. The following sentence from the Civil Constitution is especially worthy of mention: *"Parish priests should be elected by the electoral assemblies of the districts."* That was the heart of the matter. It would be extremely naive not to assume that Freemasonry, that currently plays a stronger part than during the French revolution, behind which it was the driving force, is directly or indirectly involved in the Church & Ministry initiative. This is grist to their mill. And it is therefore not too strong to say that this initiative bears within itself the seeds of the destruction of Christ's Church on earth.

After the introduction of the civil Constitution of the clergy, almost all the bishops stuck to their guns. Their public declaration ended by saying that people should not be of the opinion that the same is true of Church discipline as applies to state structures, and that God's edifice is such that it can be changed by man.[20)] How up to date that sounds! Almost half the clergy gave way and swore allegiance to the new regulations. Anyone who refused was declared schismatic (réfractair) and was to be deported with but one sure outcome: death! Pope Pius VI said the following in his sermon on the occasion of the death of the pious King Louis XVI, who died on the scaffold:

> «« Who would ever doubt that this monarch was sacrificed first of all because of religious hatred, because of a ferocious spirit against the Catholic doctrines? For a long time the Calvinists had been conspiring in France for the ruin of the

20) «Enfin q'on ne crût pas qu'il en était de la discipline de l'Église, comme de la police des états, et que l'édifice de Dieu était de nature à être changé par les hommes.» This is taken from the famous "Exposition des principes sur la Constitution civile du clergé", a statement signed by 149 bishops and which enjoyed enormous support in France and abroad.

> Catholic faith.[21)] (and also:) The main reproach levelled against this Prince, pertained to his unflinching firmness in his refusal to approve and sanction the decree for the deportation of priests and his letter written to the Bishop of Clermont to whom he announced his decision to re-establish in France the Catholic religious practice as soon as circumstances would permit. Is not this sufficient proof to conclude and defend that Louis was a martyr indeed? »»

The people of La Vendée (Anjou, Brittany, Poitou), faithful to their belief and to their monarch, refused to accept that priests chosen by Rome had to go underground. The military conscription of March 1793 was the starting shot for a regular war, including major field campaigns and the besieging of towns. On the side of the regulars (les Bleus) no prisoners were taken: everyone possible was hounded to death, including women and children. They were drowned, strangled, suffocated or simply left to die of hunger in prison, according to the most convenient manner and that which cost less. Wherever possible the harvest and food stocks were destroyed. The fat dripping from the burning bodies was collected and used in the lazarets…

After more than terrible fighting, Paris had to admit defeat. Even the 'hellish columns' had to call a halt, who had been expressly commissioned by parliament to kill pregnant women, *"those breeding grounds of highway robbers"*. On Nov. 10, 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte took over power, serving as scourge of renegade Europe.[22)] He is sensible and knows his priorities: a war attrition, as in the Vendée, serves no good purpose. On 28th December he declared freedom of religion for all, and it stuck; a first step on that road dated from as early as 1795. And yet Napoleon was no friend of the faith,[23)] since he was excommunicated in 1809 (which signalled his God-willed military defeats). The Concordat between Napoleon and the Pope, signed on 15th July 1801, was the direct result of the heroic struggle of the people of the Vendée. The Concordat confirmed the Catholic faith as primary, which meant the fiasco of the civil Constitution of the clergy. The toll was high. "La Grande Guerre" (the great war), with its two million Vendéens, ended in Febr. 1795, having cost 400,000 lives: 180,000 regulars (les Bleus) and 220,000 Vendéens (les Blancs).

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21) With this remark, Pius VI was referring to the horrible massacre of the Catholics of Nîmes, on June 13, 14 and 15 of the year 1790, committed by the Calvinists (Huguenots) backed up by the Assemblée Nationale. This act, perpetrated on the citizens of Nîmes, was their punishment for having pleaded with the King to block the acceptation of the civil Constitution of the clergy. The constitution was formally accepted by the Assembly the following month, specifically on July 12th.

The religious fights in the department of the Gard, where Nîmes is situated, have a long and painful history. The revocation in 1685 of the Edict of Nantes, under the reign of Louis XIV, provoked powerful reactions by the Protestants in the region (war of the Camisards), which called for repressive measures by the royal forces, known as the Dragonnades. The 18th century happened to be quiet and peaceful until the days that were the preamble to the Revolution when the old contentions regenerated. The subsequent reaction during the second Restoration period, by the Royalists, was bloody and counts in the general history among the darkest periods of the White Terror (July-August 1815).

22) The coup d'état of 18/19 Brumaire in the year VIII of the revolutionary calendar is widely regarded as the end of the French Revolution and the beginning of the Napoleonic dictatorship.

23) Pope Pius VI condemned the French Revolution and the suppression of the Catholic Church in France that resulted from it. French troops commanded by Napoleon Bonaparte defeated the Papal army and occupied the Papal States in 1796. In 1798, upon his refusal to renounce his temporal power, the Pope was taken prisoner and transported to France. He died eighteen months later in Valence on August 29 1799.

11 – Nothing can stop God's triumph

What we are now going through is worse than at the time of the Frenchg Revolution and later under Communism. God's Kingdom on earth and his flock are no longer threatened directly, but faith is being smothered within the Mystical Body of the Church until a flame burns only here and there. Divine Love has to make more and more space for worldly love. Cardinal Pacelli saw it coming. Before he became Pope Pius XII, he warned that *"a day would come when the civilized world will deny its God, when the Church will doubt as Peter doubted. She will be tempted to believe that Man has become God, that his Son is only a symbol and, in the churches, Christians will look in vain for the red Altar lamp where God awaits them."*

The Church is now suffering its own Golgotha. And yet no demonic or human action will be able to jeopardize God's triumph. *"Never is God more of a conqueror than when his cause appears lost, and never is the devil more radically conquered than when he seems to have won the game."* These are the words of professor Jean Vaquié, that great French post-conciliar fighter for the ecclesiastical tradition, who also said: *"In the same way as on Calvary, when the Son of God hung nailed to the wood of the Cross as willed by the princes, the priests and the chosen people, Satan's triumph seemed complete. And yet! His defeat was total, for the work of redemption of the human race was consummated by the sacrifice of Our Lord."*

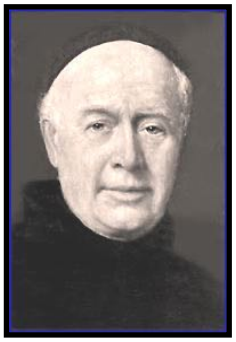
12 – A torrent of grace

If the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has been turned into pure ritual, a fine stage play, who then will want to become a priest? Desacralisation reaching even further can never be the solution for lack of priestly vocations. The solution must be found in a re-valuation of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. A solution of this kind is offered to us by the venerable Conchita Cabrera de Armida (1861-1937), commonly called the Great Conchita of Mexico. This woman wrote a great deal about the Holy Eucharist, encouraged in this by a lively dialogue with Christ.

She was mother of nine children, living at a time of major persecution of the faithful. This period between 1910 and 1921 can be directly compared with the French Revolution. By order of the State, churches were closed and priest murdered. The "Ten Tragic Days" of Mexico run parallel to the French reign of terror (Le Règne du Terreur). In the first 15 months of the God-hating regime in Mexico 80,000 people were killed. The number was to increase to 900,000 – for a total population of 15 million! In 1926 the so-called Calles Law forbade under severe sanctions the celebration of the Mass. Critics were given a two-year prison sentence. Education in particular had to suffer. Anyone wishing to teach had to sign a statement that they were an irreconcilable enemy of the Catholic Church. Calles declared: *"We need to get hold of the consciences of the young people because they are part of and must be part of the revolution. We must absolutely banish the clerical and conservative enemy from all levels of society where it is hiding – I mean from education."* It is within this context that Conchita wrote about priests and the Holy Eucharist. She also provides the remedy for our current crisis, one that is far from being over.[24)] I quote from her extensive work: [25)]

> «« In the modern world the preoccupations and the problems that people have to face are so numerous and so anguishing that they often feel the need to find a solution as soon as possible. This is particularly the case with priests, who run the risk of drowning themselves in a multiplicity of activities. And when distracted by the innumerable duties of their ministry, they torture their minds to know how they will manage to reconcile their life of prayer with that involved in the tasks they have to fulfil. This unity in their life, this (purely external)

putting in order of their ministry, and even the simple practice of pious acts, is impossible to accomplish from a human vantage point, even if the latter favours it. In order to unify their life and their ministry, priests should imitate Christ, whose nourishment consisted of doing the will of the One who sent Him to perfect his work of salvation. »»



How should you search for and find the love of God? You will find it in the Blessed Sacrament: His Love is exposed there to adoration. He wishes to give Himself there. It is there that the angels in stupefaction see the spectacle of the excess of the love of Jesus. If at least Jesus were to come into a human heart as beautiful and pure as the angel; but Jesus comes, it pleases Him to come, into an imperfect heart, filled with venial sins and defects. At this sight, the most beautiful angels cannot sufficiently wonder at what Jesus does in His infinite love.

Father Paul, pray for us

From the book: "Père Paul de Moll (bénédictin belge) – un thaumaturge au XIXe siècle" by Édouard van Speybrouck (2007, Transiit Benefaciendo, p. 126).

Here we see a present-day problem in the exercise of the priestly office. The way in which the document "The Church and the Ministry" is drawn up fits in there and makes us think of a cry of despair. The pastor carries his parish. What a burden! But do the parishioners in their turn carry their pastor? Do they pray for him? To my shame, I must confess that in earlier times I scarcely prayed for the priests in my parishes (I have moved house several times). Jesus said to Conchita:

«« I wish that in all dioceses the faithful should offer up their Sunday communion for the priests, for they have a great need of the Holy Spirit. I promise that the beneficial effects will not be long in showing themselves in the Church. »»

And yet the priests are not devoid of blame, for Jesus says:

«« If the devil has gained ground in my vineyard, it is because of a lack of saintly workers labouring there. Instead there are only tepid, dissipated, worldly priests, assimilated into the spirit of the world and who have allowed themselves

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24) Although the Vatican is putting up a good fight, the crisis is far from having blown over. Thus on 15th March 2008 a book by Jürgen Mettepenningen, working at the Faculty of Theology of Louvain University, was published: "De Kerk bloost - pleidooi voor een gedurfder beleid" (The Church blushes – a plea for a more daring policy). Mettepenningen makes a plea for the Church to show a major drive to give itself a clear profile. The language of the Eucharistic celebration should be freshened up: "This language is no longer today's normal speech. You cannot proclaim a message of life in a dead language." According to Mettepenningen it cannot be that no Masses be offered in certain places because there is no priest. And too many church services are organised for people, like for a marriage, who otherwise never see the inside of a church. Hence, according to the theologian, society itself must organise rituals for crucial events in life. And the priesthood of women is, in his opinion, a dated problem that the church authorities themselves have created and is a constant source of self-impoverishment. May I ask Mettepenningen a question: "If the sacrifice of the Mass is in persona Christi, a man, how can the priest be a woman?"

25) De citaten van de Grote Conchita zijn ontleend aan "Conchita Cabrera de Armida – au cœur du Mystère Eucharistique", door Juan Gutiérrez Gonzáles, Pierre Téqui éditeur, Paris # 2004. (pp. 108-109, 301, 295-97)

to be dragged along by the prevailing atmosphere, without showing any resistance, nor fighting against it, while neglecting the essential part of their ministry, which is to transform themselves into Me. »»

Conchita goes on to explain how the priest becomes one with Christ in a careful and trusty celebration of the Mass. This is known as ‘in persona Christi’, since it is Christ who, through the priest, brings about the sacrifice of the Mass. In this way the priest receives all the graces he needs to fulfil his sacred duties. Just as the bread is transubstantiated, explains Conchita, so also God wishes to transubstantiate the priest which, in the latter case, is brought about not by a single word but which has to be expressed more and more in his whole life. Building on this theme, Jesus says:

«« You must understand that this desire to transubstantiate the priests into Me is not a more or less great and simple devotion but an essential point which has not been taken into account, and yet it is the most important for the victory of the Church. The time has come for a profound renewal of the hearts of priests, in order to respond to the desires of my heart, without which the Church will not develop spiritually towards sanctity as I would wish.

The priests are much too keen on following the traits of their human nature without raising their eyes upwards. They remain stuck to the earth and to the material things that tarnish and dishonour the things of God. That is why I wish the life of priests, their entire being, their heart, their soul and their life should become more spiritual. In short, I desire everything in them to be transformed into Me.

May I tell you the secret of my heart with regard to priests? Yes, I shall tell you: I wish to make rich men of my priests, filling them not with vain and transitory riches but with Myself, with everything I am, with everything I have, so that even on this earth they should be united to the Blessed Trinity.

Ah! If only you knew how much I desire to unite priests to Myself! My soul cannot stand to see them so far off and so lost. And their indifference, their disloyalty, their coldness towards my Church, their indifference to spiritual matters and to souls, this is what causes me the greatest pain. This is what I wish to see disappear, less for my pleasure than for their own sanctity. This is what will restore joy to the face of the Father!

Oh! My daughter! Demand this spiritual renewal of the priests, something that will happen only if they do truly welcome the Holy Spirit and transform themselves into Me…

If the priests represent Me in a dignified way on earth, if they transform themselves into Me, a torrent of grace will descend on humanity. It will be like opening a door to let God in so that he can flood and start distributing new gifts, new charismas, unsuspected lights and treasures, which will be received first by the purified and sanctified hearts of priests. It will be as if a new breach has been opened to allow the Father to pour out his graces on his divine Son, his unique priest, in whom He contemplates all priests. »»

Finally, the following admonition, which fits well with the crisis in the present Church. It means that churchgoers must wait before further disturbing unity with merciless and stubborn criticism:

«« You must understand that everything designed to destroy this work of unification between Me and the priest is diabolical, and that everything not tending to construct unity is false and does not lead to Heaven. »»

Illustration at the beginning of this article:

Patriarch Bartholomew I of the Orthodox Church assists at Papal Holy Mass in the Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Spirit in Istanbul on Nov. 29, 2006, during the official visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Turkey.

Programme:

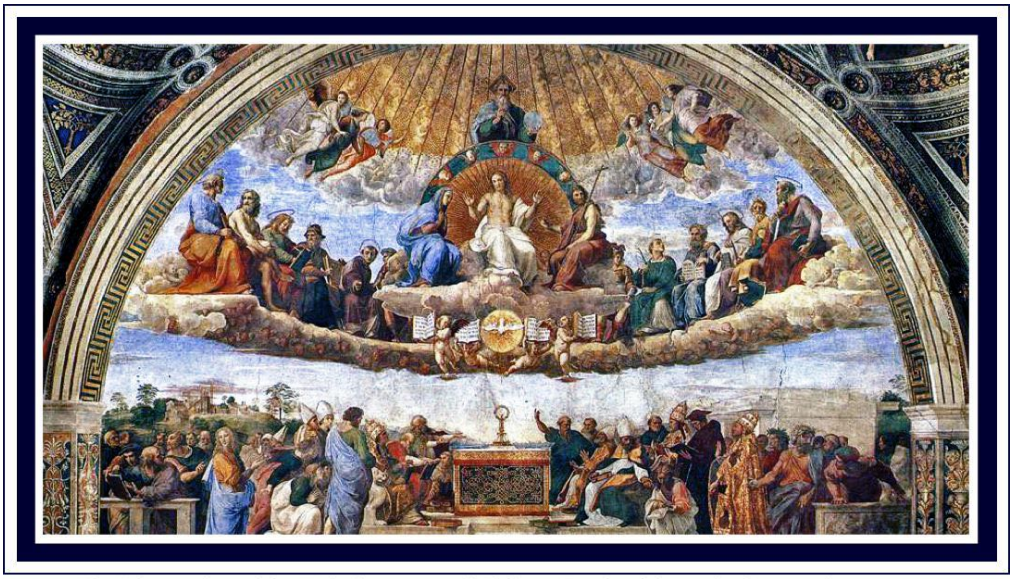
28 nov. Pope Benedict XVI arrives in Ankara where he meets Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan; visits the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the modern republic; and then meets President Ahmet Necdet Sezer.

29 nov. Pope goes to Ephesus to celebrate Mass at the site where the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was taken to heaven and then goes to Istanbul to meet Patriarch Bartholomew I, spiritual leader of the Orthodox Church, for first of series of encounters.

1 dec. Pope visits Haghia Sophia (a 6th-century Christian church converted into mosque in 1453 and a model for all other mosques built afterwards. It was transformed into museum in 1935; Pope also visits the Blue Mosque.

Ch. 3

‘THE CHURCH VICTORIOUS’



The Disputation of the Holy Sacrament (1509) – a Raphael fresco in the papal apartments

Our previous article discuss23002.ed the brochure ‘The Church and the Ministry’, published by the Dutch Dominicans, in which a new organisation was advocated of priests and people, to be joined together in the so-called centre for faith and spirituality, to address the lack of priestly vocations and the emptying of churches. It is typical of our time to seek the solution to a problem in an appropriate form of organization, in structures and consultative bodies. Their organizational plan would meet present-day religious needs. It seems appropriate to comment on this, now that on April 8, 2008, the national bishops responded through a pastoral letter: ‘Church, Eucharist and Priesthood’.

13 – Do nothing and wait for the Promise

But how can a new type of organisation satisfy those needs if the essence is a crisis of faith? For as the bishops state, “*the crisis of vocations is in a broader context of a crisis of faith and a crisis of succession, indeed, a certain cultural crisis.*” There have been other crises. The Dominicans pretend that we are in a previously unfamiliar situation. This is in some ways the case, but not as regards the lack of priests and the all-present crisis of belief. The Church has never had an easy time, since each generation has to discover the Lord anew. Take the 13th century for instance. The previous century had been one of an exceptional flourishing of the Church, but the autumn soon came. In the early years of the 13th century Francis of Assisi had a dream in which God called him to rebuild His fallen Church. When he awoke, he immediately seized a trowel and began to collect stones to restore the ruined church in which he had spent the night. But very soon he understood that God’s wish was otherwise, and the he started with his preaching on repentance and penance. That was what the Church needed at the time! Constructing buildings, modern structures – beautiful things, but they miss the heart of the matter. God is a beggar who goes round knocking on doors and asking: “Please may I lodge here?” The King of the Universe, dressed in incomparable majesty and glory, wishes to lodge with us. He longs to do so, and He speaks to us sinners with

respect and softly beckoning HE asks: May I?" Faith is thus more important than a structure.

Let us be sure of what we are saying. The starting point of the Early Church was not a management plan. In the forty days before his Ascension, do you think that Christ found it necessary to hold a brainstorming session with a flip chart presentation where, dressed in a three-piece suit, He drew up his plan? I think not. But He did speak about things concerning his Kingdom, and when He was finished He said: "You may do nothing and you must wait on the Promise". Do nothing: what a strange task! The promise? Yes, the promise, the promise of the Holy Spirit. And that Holy Spirit is still at work, though no longer in such a sensational manner. No more tongues of fire and no house-shaking whirlwind.

preparatory drawing for the Disputa, placed bottom left in final composition

14 – The Church Triumphant and the Church Militant

Before focusing on the promise of the Holy Spirit in relation to our subject, I would first like to draw your attention to the forty days of Jesus' preaching on the things pertaining to the Kingdom (the period between resurrection and ascension). The whole of Christology can be placed under this term. A synonym for 'kingdom' in this context is 'theocracy'. This is already within our grasp for those parts of our personal life and the social set-up in which we strive for it, using the means of grace offered to us by the Holy Church.[26)]

The theocracy, or the Kingdom of God, exists everywhere where the Church Militant on earth and the Church Triumphant above are united with one another. In this context I am forced to think of the tremendous fresco painted by Raphael in the papal apartments and known as "The Disputation of the Holy Sacrament".[27)] This fresco can be seen as a portrayal of the unification of the Church Militant below, and the Church Triumphant above. These are not independent of each other. Thanks to the bond

26) In the light of the gifts of grace offered to us by the Church, we can state without exaggeration that the twenty centuries that God has thus far granted to humanity have been lost insofar that they have been scarcely used, at least insufficiently.

between these two bodies, the Church Militant here below is also a Victorious Church. If that bond were to fail, the world would be abandoned to the forces of destruction.

Rafaëls schildering is rondom de Heilige Geest en de monstrans gedrapeerd die de gewijde Hostie bevat, staande op het altaar. Menselijke figuren, geconcentreerd op en in aanbidding van de Heilige Hostie, zijn als elementen van de zegevierende en van de strijdende Kerk in twee halve cirkels opgesteld, de een boven de ander. God de Vader, in hemelse glorie badend, zendt de Heilige Geest uit over de menigte van bijbelse en kerkelijke figuren, die – al delibererend over de Hostie – de Heilige Mis onderschrijven. Beneden in de compositie staan in een uitgebreid landschap, dat door het altaar, het eucharistisch Offer en de Heilige Geest worden overheerst, heiligen, pausen, bisschoppen, priesters en de menigte van gelovigen. Zij vertegenwoordigen de strijdende Kerk hier op aarde, die destijds heldhaftigheid heeft betoond en dat ook zal blijven doen, wijl zij met het geestesoog de Heilige Drievuldigheid aanschouwt. Doorheen het altijddurende Offer van de Hostie smeekt zij de bijstand af van de boven hen tronende zegevierende Kerk.

The risen Christ sits on a throne of clouds between the Most Holy Virgin - bowed in adoration, and St. John the Baptist, who, according to iconographic tradition, points to Christ. The apostles, evangelists and martyrs of the Old and New Testament are seated around this central group on a semicircular bank of clouds similar to that which constitutes the throne of Christ. They form a composed and silent crowd, and although they are painted with large fields of colour, these figures are highly individualised. Following a 15th-century tradition, Raphael has placed portraits of famous personalities,

27) The four “Stanze di Raffaello” are a suite of reception rooms, which form the public part of the papal apartments. A stanza is a unit in poetry, or otherwise, within a larger context (the term means stopping place in Italian). The Stanze di Raffaello are famous for their frescoes painted by Raphael and his studio. Together with Michelangelo’s ceiling frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, these are the grand fresco sequences that mark the High Renaissance in Rome. The Stanze, as they are invariably called, were originally intended for the suite of apartments of Pope Julius II. He commissioned Raphael and his studio in 1508 or 1509 to redecorate the existing interiors of the rooms entirely. They are on the 3rd floor overlooking the Belvedere Courtyard. (see Wikipedia)

both alive and dead, among the people in the crowd. For instance, the first architect of the St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Donato Brabant, is shown leaning on the balustrade on the left. Pope Julius II, who personifies Gregory the Great, is seated near the altar. Dante is visible on the right, distinguished by his laurel wreath. Among them are also the famous teachers of the Church, including Dominic, Francis, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, as well as Dun Scotus, Nicholas of Lyra, Dante, Savonarola, and all the theologians deemed worthy for the Triumphant Church. The presence of Savonarola seems strange, but may be explained by the fact that Julius II revoked Pope Alexander VI's condemnation of him.

The scene is characterised by an extreme clarity and simplicity of its structure, which Raphael achieved through preparatory sketches, studies and drawings containing notable differences in pose. The mental legacy of other artists from his circle is clearly identifiable throughout the composition, but the layout, the gestures and the poses are original products of Raphael's search for perfection, which here reaches a degree of admirable balance and high expressive dignity. Says Giorgio Vasari, commenting on the children in the air: [28)]

> «« … four children holding open the Gospels and really, it would be impossible for any other painter to produce figures of more grace and perfection than these. The saints in the group in the air seem alive, and are remarkable for the foreshortening (of the perspective) and their depth effect. Their draperies also are varied and very beautiful, and the heads rather celestial than human, especially that of Christ, displaying all the clemency and pity, which a painting of the divine can demonstrate to mortal man. »»

At the geometric centre of this breath-taking painting is the Holy Ghost in the familiar form of a dove in a luminous circle, somewhat raised above the monstrance in the composition. In a downward motion this divine Person is moving towards the monstrance, which symbolises the gate between the earthly and the transcendental realities. The Holy Ghost descends through this gate to give his gifts to the Church Militant through the Blessed Sacrament, the incarnation of the second divine Person. And it is through this same gate that the Church Triumphant seeks its way to the Church Militant. Thanks to the gate the Church Militant will happen to be a victorious Church, despite the heavy attacks that constantly shake Her. The Biblical prophecy, that the gates of Hell will never prevail against Her, must be understood in this context. Enemies are numerous, cruel tricks and traps lie everywhere in wait for the Church. Were it not for God's immeasurable mercy, especially thanks to and by way of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we would suffer the same fate as Sodom and Gomorra.

15 – A plan of action

With this description I want to indicate that the progress of Christ's Church on earth must be understood from the mystical point of view. The material world came into being from the invisible and is carried by it (fundamental point of belief), and the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, is carried by that same invisible. However the Church is also attacked by the same, though a different, invisible world. Thus it is that a victory can only be gained from that domain. We are partners in God's plan of

creation, but not without God's support through the means of grace that He makes available in an indissoluble union with the members of the Church Triumphant, yet not without the priesthood, because that is how God the Father intended it to be.

We have now come to the point of the grace-nature interdependence. The most tangible expression of the divine grace (an invisibility) that thanks to Jesus Christ is ours, is represented by the priesthood, which reveals itself particularly in the sacrament of the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Indeed, it is thanks to ordination into the priesthood that human beings (in the realm of nature) are able to administer the sacraments (in the realm of grace). It is Christ Himself who deigns to allow priests, through priestly actions and words, to make transubstantiation happen (in the domain of nature) out of the spiritual domain. But that is not all. A priest is likewise endowed with a special power of blessing. A priest, being an extension of the Incarnation, acts in Persona Christi. Therefore, the priesthood stands far above an ordinary Christian, even above the position of angels, and the demons tremble before him.

- *Blessed be God.*
- *Blessed be His Holy Name.*
- *Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.*
- *Blessed be the Name of Jesus.*
- *Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.*
- *Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.*
- *Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.*
- *Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.*
- *Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most Holy.*
- *Blessed be her Holy and Immaculate Conception.*
- *Blessed be her Glorious Assumption.*
- *Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.*
- *Blessed be Saint Joseph, her most chaste spouse.*

Let us use these means, and not allow ourselves to follow the wrong path because of a desire for action. On the contrary: we should do nothing and wait for the promise. But did the apostles do nothing, in the absolute meaning of the term? No, since it is written: *"They all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers."* I would now like to quote from my earlier article where I cited the Great Conchita of Mexico, through whose pen Jesus dictated:

> «« I wish that in all dioceses the faithful should offer up their Sunday communion for the priests, for they have a great need of the Holy Spirit. I promise that the beneficial effects will not be long in showing themselves in the Church. »»

I also quoted Gloria Polo of Columbia who had heard from Jesus:

> «« Who did you think you were, making yourself God and judging My anointed? They are 'human', and the holiness of a priest is built by his community, that prays, loves, and supports him. When a priest sins, his community is questioned, not him. »»

28) "The Lives of the Most Excellent Architects" by Giorgio Vasari - Florence (1568), under the chapter "Painters and Sculptors". (Referred to by the Columbia University Educational Department website)

These are powerful words that show that our prayers for our parish priest are not optional. The community of believers has a clear duty, practically democratic. The Second Vatican Council put it like this:

> «« …a common dignity of members deriving from their rebirth in Christ, a common grace as sons, a common vocation to perfection, one salvation, one hope and undivided charity. (…) Although by Christ's will some are established as teachers, dispensers of the mysteries and pastors for the others, there remains, nevertheless, a true equality between all with regard to the dignity and to the activity which is common to all the faithful in the building up of the Body of Christ. »» (Lumen Gentium 32)

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the death of the Saint Curé d'Ars, Pope Benedict XVI established a Year for Priests, which went from mid-2009 to mid-2010. Hence, the Apostolic Penitentiary of Rome provided the possibility of a Plenary Indulgence, in particular for priests, but also granted to all the faithful according to the form described below, which perfectly agrees with the words of Gloria Polo:

> «« The Plenary Indulgence is granted to all the faithful who are truly repentant and who, in church or in chapel, devoutly attend the divine Sacrifice of Mass and offer prayers and any good work they do that day to Jesus Christ the Eternal High Priest, for the priests of the Church, so that He may sanctify them and form them in accordance with his Heart, as long as they have made expiation for their sins through Sacramental Confession and pray in accordance with the Supreme Pontiff's intentions. »»

With my argument, I wished to show that what Conchita and Gloria Polo say may not be regarded as just so many words, but that they fit well within the sacramental economy of salvation. 'Economy' here refers to the principles and practices used by the community of believers to organise the ownership and the sharing out of the gifts of

grace. That is how simply God organises his work! All that is required is that on Sundays the Holy Mass is offered to the benefit of the serving priest and offer that day for this intention to God in order to turn the Church Militant into the Church Victorious, and this – so I understand it – to the exclusion of other intentions that, during the Mass, are lowered to the level of daily intentions. Implicitly this means that the faithful who take the matter seriously, attend Holy Mass more than once per week. It can be painful to exclude certain intentions from the endless services rendered by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, but it can be recuperated during the week. It is no reason for concern, for if we pray for the priests, then we pray for ourselves and for the Church, and when we pray for the Church we also pray for the entire world and for all those who are close to our hearts. If we believe that this is how it works, this way is within everyone's reach. Can it be any simpler?

My fervent wish is that there should be ten or more faithful in each parish who attend Holy Mass in this way every Sunday. The Old Testament gives us various examples of situations where ten people expressed a wish and their wish was granted. If there had been ten just people in Sodom and Gomorra, God would not have decided to destroy those cities. And yet even two believers would suffice, for *"where two or more are gathered together in Christ's name, God is in the midst of them."* On the condition, of course, that they must strive to increase their number to ten. And would it not be a good idea for priests to take the initiative to propose this line of action to their parishioners? This is not simply a luxury, for as Jesus had Conchita write, meaning the priests:

> «« …and when distracted by the innumerable duties of their ministry, they torture their minds to know how they will manage to reconcile their life of prayer with that involved in the tasks they have to fulfil. This unity in their life, this [purely external] putting in order of their ministry, and even the simple practice of pious acts, is impossible to accomplish from a human point of view, even if the latter favours it. »»

The approach outlined here fits in well with the pastoral letter that gave rise to this article. By way of remedy for the current crisis of faith the bishops make the case for a deepening of the life of the community of belief. If ordinary parishioners were to apply themselves according to these simple guidelines in, let us say, the centres for faith and spirituality, which the bishops call small Christian communities, God's gifts will not be long in coming! The bishops state very clearly that the Eucharist is ***"source and high point of Christian life"***. The Eucharist must never be seen as a matter of course. How right they are to say that ***"the priestly office is not merely functional but sacramental in its nature."*** Let us therefore act as if we believe this!

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APPENDIX 1

CARRY THE PARISH PRIESTS IN YOUR HEART

This presentation intends to further underline an important point of the article "The Victorious Church" also with regard to the Dutch episcopal letter "Church, Eucharist and Priesthood", and herewith some concrete proposals are given. By way of introduction, a moving story from Japan. Father Petitjean's story is taken from Beauchesne's "Encyclopédie Maria" # 1956 (tome 4, p. 27).

Retrieved from an editorial by Jan Leechburch Auwers
De Brandende Lamp (The Burning Lamp) no. 114, summer 2008

Is our heart like yours?

In 1865, Japan reopened its gates to foreigners after being completely closed for more than two centuries. Father Petitjean of the Missions Etrangères (foreign missions) of Paris disembarked at Nagasaki and established a small church in this city. He tells:

«« One day there was a group of 12 to 15 people - men, women and children - at the door of our church. I hurried to open the church door. A woman came to me and with her hand on her heart she said to me*: "Our heart and the heart of all of us here present, is it like yours?" – "Certainly"* I answered her, *"but where are you from?" – "We are pretty much all from Urakami. Almost everyone in Urakami carries in their hearts the same feelings as us."* And immediately after, the woman asked: *"Where is the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary?"* Upon hearing this blessed name (Father Petitjean continued), I no longer had any doubts. I kept in mind that I was in the presence of ancient Christian believers in Japan. They were about fifteen thousand in number and

had kept their Catholic faith, and that without a priest in their midst. I accompanied the group to the altar of the Blessed Virgin. Filled with great joy and emotion, they all began to pray. »» [29)]

Episcopal letter 'Church, Eucharist and Priesthood'

I had been looking forward to this important church letter since fall 2007; it appeared Tuesday, June 17, 2008 (but dated April 8). Part of the reason for this letter was the distribution last year of the Dutch Dominicans' brochure "Church & Ministry". In it, theories were developed that were completely at odds with the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. For example, it was suggested – in order to quickly get out of the impasse of the priest shortage – that each parish community should select someone from its own circle, who would thus be authorized to preside in the Eucharist, with or without the consent and blessing of the local bishop. The normal Catholic belief in Eucharist, sacrament of priesthood, in Church authority and hierarchy was thus trampled upon. You will now also understand why we pointed to the example of some 15,000 Japanese who remained faithful to the pure Catholic faith for more than two centuries, without even considering choosing anyone from among them to preside at the Eucharist.

The headquarters in Rome of the Order of Dominicans had already reacted negatively to the deplorable nature of the Church & Ministry publication. It was extremely important for our bishops to make their stand against this Dutch monstrosity. The episcopal letter was drafted as follows:

- *the Church: in search of the self-understanding of the Roman Catholic Church according to Vatican II;*
- *the Eucharist: source and culmination of all Christian life;*
- *the priesthood: not merely functional but above all sacramental in character;*
- *working together on the challenges facing dioceses and parishes;*
- *and in conclusion: the Church as an ancient spring with fresh water bubbling up.*

The initiative of the Congregation for the Clergy

The Congregation for the Clergy recently launched the Eucharistic adoration initiative to achieve sanctification of our priests. It begins its letter of Dec. 8, 2007, on the high feast of the Immaculate Conception of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, by noting that in the present circumstances there is an enormous amount of work to be done for the spiritual well-being of priests and the fecundity of their pastoral ministry. It wishes to initiate a movement from the essential link that exists between the Holy Eucharist and the functioning of the priesthood. From the special status held by the most Blessed Virgin in the Church, the Congregation for the Clergy wishes that people may arise to consecrate priests from their environment, every day, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. For she is the mother of Jesus Christ, the High Priest in eternity, with whom she is intimately united. For this reason she wishes to help all priests to grow into the image of her son, a task entrusted to her by Jesus. This initiative should culminate in a personal commitment by women and men to adopt priests in a spiritual sense and invisibly assist them by their constant prayer and sacrifice, for which ordinary life

29) Was it perhaps intentional that this very Christian Japanese city was chosen to drop one of the two American atomic bombs? Out of hatred for the Christian way of life. By the way, there are strong indications that the Japanese would have been willing to capitulate even without this catastrophe.

offers sufficient opportunities. In addition, with its initiative, the Congregation hopes to initiate a chain of everlasting Eucharistic adoration with a view to the sanctification of the clergy and the emergence of new vocations.

Prayer for priests

In the spirit of St. Theresa of Lisieux: O Jesus, eternal High Priest, protect your priests in the shelter of your Sacred Heart where nobody can harm them. Keep their anointed hands immaculate, those hands that daily touch your Holy Body. Keep pure their lips that are stained red with your Precious Blood. Keep their hearts pure and raised above earthly things, hearts sealed by the sacred sign of the priesthood. Let them grow in love and faithfulness to You and safeguard them from contamination by the world. Give them power over hearts, as they have the power to transform bread and wine. Bless their work with rich fruits and finally give them the crown of everlasting life. Amen.

APPENDIX 2

HOW THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS WAS KNOCKED FROM ITS THRONE

The New Mass or “Novus Ordo Missae”, or NOM for short, is the elaboration of the conciliar decision of December 4, 1963, under the name “Sacrosanctum Concilium” (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy). This envisioned a more active participation of the faithful during celebration, which was a commendable endeavor, since at the time it was almost non-existent. However, the elaboration of the constitution was of a completely different caliber and took absolutely no account of the official guidelines. As early as 1965, on the basis of Sacrosanctum Concilium, a valid instruction for the celebration of Mass appeared, but it did not last long. There have been a number of incremental changes since the introduction of the Tridentine Mass (Mass of the Council of Trent, a council that was held intermittently from 1545 to 1563). The first change occurred as early as 34 years after its introduction. It should be noted that the Tridentine Mass brought nothing new but formalized what already existed. A change also came under Pope John XXIII and that was in 1962, so before the Second Vatican Council had even begun. But that was still within the traditional teaching. What took place with the NOM was a rite change, which constituted an unprecedented break with past practice. It was not a logical consequence of the council decisions and did not conform to any established practice or attitude of faith. It was decreed by a recalcitrant section of the College of Cardinals and was in fact an outgrowth of the so-called New Liturgical Movement with names such as the Belgian Dom Beauduin (1873-1960) and Cardinal Mercier (1851-1926), also of Belgian origin.

"The Novus Ordo Missae represents, as a whole and in detail, a striking departure from the Catholic theology of the Holy Mass as it was formulated in the 22nd Session of the Council of Trent, which, by fixing definitively the canons of the rite, erected an insurmountable barrier against any heresy which might attack the integrity of the Mystery." It was with these words that Cardinals Alfredo Ottaviani and Antonio Bacci addressed Pope Paul VI on Sept. 3, 1969 – the feast day of Saint Pius X – when they presented the "Breve Esame Critico del Novus Ordo Missæ" (Brief Critical Examination of the NOM) to the Pope, already several weeks after the NOM had come into force. The Breve Esame Critico was distributed in 2005 at the behest of Pope John-Paul II on the occasion of the Year of the Eucharist, with the Pope taking the opportunity to finally end the banishment of the Tridentine Mass.

The Breve Esame Critico says that the NOM is not an ode to God, but on the contrary, an accumulation of dishonor. It continues that it is human-centered rather than God-centered. That is why it is performed with its back to the tabernacle and facing the public, deletes the Gloria and the Offertory and mutilates the Creed, ignores the intercession of the saints and the remembrance of souls in Purgatory and also everything that expresses the personal sacrifice of the priest. It deletes the prayers of Pope Leo XIII at the end and, of course, replaces Latin with the vernacular. This rite is the loud echo of Modernism, which was called *"the aggregation of all heresies"* by Pius X in his 1907 encyclical: "Pascendi Dominici Gregis". It blatantly seeks to dilute the meaning of the Real Presence as well as that of the ordained priesthood. It denigrates the sacrificial and atoning character of the Holy Mass. This rite attempts to reduce the Holy Eucharist to a communal love meal that is far from a renewal of the Sacrifice of the Cross. The latter is one of the central dogmas of our Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and cannot be tampered with.

Monsignor Klaus Gamber is recognized as one of the best liturgists of the 20th century. He concludes on the reform of the liturgy**:** *"Obviously, the reformers wanted a completely new liturgy, a liturgy that differed from the traditional one in spirit as well as in form; and in no way a liturgy that represented what the Council Fathers had envisioned, i.e., a liturgy that would meet the pastoral needs of the faithful."* He deprecates *"the cold breath of realism that now pervades our worship"*.[30)] How these changes were incorporated is exemplified by Pope Benedict XVI, then the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in his foreword to the French translation of 1992 of Gamber's book on the reform (German edition 1981). Surprisingly, the foreword was refused. It read as follows:[31)] *"I too lived through that period. I am speaking from experience, since I too lived through that period with all its hopes and its confusion. And I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church."* This remark ties in with what he remarks on the turn of the millennium in the "Spirit of Liturgy": *"Anyone who nowadays advocates the continuing existence of the old Latin liturgy or takes part in it, is treated like a leper; all tolerance ends here. There has never been anything like this in history; in doing so we are despising and proscribing the Church's whole past."*

It is precisely this principle of the sanctified past, called tradition for short, to which the sixteenth century Reformers took offence. The NOM has therefore been called a 'reformational infringement'. The paradigm of the Reformation movements about the

30) "The Reform of the Roman Liturgy: Its Problems and Background" (pp. 100, 13).

essence of the tradition is the great divide between Protestantism and Rome, and it is this breach that the heretical Pope Francis wants to bridge. All in the name of the many-headed monster of oecumenism. Apparently, no council is needed for that. Bergoglio (alias Pope Francis) just does what he feels like doing.

De Breve Esame Critico concludes:

> «« When the Novus Ordo was presented at the Vatican Press Office, it was impudently asserted that conditions, which prompted the decrees of the Council of Trent, no longer exist. Not only do these decrees still apply today, but conditions now are infinitely worse. It was precisely to repel those snares which in every age threaten the pure Deposit of Faith, that the Church, under divine inspiration, set up dogmatic definitions and doctrinal pronouncements as her defenses. These, in turn, immediately influenced her worship, which became the most complete monument to her faith.
>
> Trying to return this worship to the practices of Christian antiquity and recreating artificially the original spontaneity of ancient times is to engage in that *"unhealthy archaeologism",* Pius XII so roundly condemned. It is, moreover, to dismantle all the theological ramparts erected for the protection of the rite and to take away all the beauty which enriched it for centuries. And all this at one of the most critical moments – if not the most critical moment – in the Church's history.
>
> Today, division and schism are officially acknowledged to exist not only outside the Church, but within her as well. The Church's unity is not only threatened, but has already been tragically compromised. Errors against the Faith are not merely insinuated, but are, as has been likewise acknowledged, now forcibly imposed through liturgical abuses and aberrations. To abandon a liturgical tradition which for four centuries stood as a sign and pledge of unity in worship, and to replace it with another liturgy which, due to the countless liberties it implicitly authorizes, cannot be but a sign of division. A liturgy which teems with insinuations or manifest errors against the integrity of the Catholic Faith is – we feel bound in conscience to proclaim – an incalculable error. »»

The breach with the traditional Mass was accomplished in two ways. First, in the accompanying theological motivation in which the sacredness and sacrificial nature of the Real Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ [the transsubstantiation] is fatally refuted, while an almost obsessive emphasis is placed on the 'communal meal'. Second, the liturgy itself is compromised in essential ways. The Breve Esame Critico manages to articulate this excellently, quoting here just a few aspects.

Quotation: The reason why the principle of a sacrifice is no longer explicitly mentioned is simple: the central role of the Real Presence [of Christ] has been suppressed. This central role was so splendidly expressed in the Eucharistic liturgy of the Roman Missal of St. Pius V (1566-1572). In the General Instruction of the NOM, the Real Presence is mentioned just once, and that in a footnote which is the only reference to the Council of Trent. Here again, the context is that of [corporal] nourishment. The

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31) Una Voce America, 2013, no 48.

real and permanent Presence of Christ in the transsubstantiated Species: Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity - is never alluded to. The very word transsubstantiation is completely ignored.

The invocation of the Holy Spirit in the Offertory – the prayer "Come, Thou Sanctifier" – has likewise been suppressed, with its petition that He descend upon the offerings to accomplish the miracle of the Divine Presence again, just as He once descended into the Virgin's womb. This suppression is one more in a series of denials and degradations of the Real Presence, both tacit and systematic.

Finally, it is impossible to neglect the suppressions or changes that implicitly repudiate the faith in the Real Presence. The New Mass Order removed:

a) Genuflections. No more than three remain for the priest, and – with certain exceptions – one of the faithful at the moment of the Consecration. [Now, in 2025, almost nobody kneels anymore.]
b) Purification of the priest's fingers over the chalice.
c) Preserving the priest's fingers from all profane contact after the Consecration.
d) Purification of sacred vessels, which need not be done immediately, nor has it to be made on the corporal.
e) Protecting the contents of the chalice with a piece of stiffened linen, the palla.
f) Gilding for the interior of sacred vessels.
g) Solemn consecration for movable altars.
h) Consecrated stones and relics of the saints in the movable altar or on the 'table' when Mass is celebrated outside a sacred place. [This omission is a tacit invitation to 'eucharistic dinners' in private homes.]
i) Three cloths on the altar – reduced to one.
j) Thanksgiving for the Eucharist made kneeling, now replaced by the grotesque practice of the priest and people sitting to make their thanksgiving – a logical corollary to receiving communion standing upright.
k) All the ancient prescriptions observed in the case of a consecrated Host that has fallen to the ground, are now reduced to a single, nearly sarcastic instruction: *"It is to be picked up reverently"*. (unquote)

The question is legitimate whether this also obstructs the miracle of transsubstantiation, which a number of Cardinal Lefèbvre's followers answer affirmatively out of their love for Jesus and his Church. To them, there is no transsubstantiation. Even though the NOM represents a radical breach with the past, it can be argued on the basis of a number of arguments that if the New Mass is performed and attended with the required reverence and intention, the Almighty God will not hesitate to perform the miracle at the utterance of the consecration words, which in the NOM are also Biblically founded, albeit somewhat different from the Tridentine Mass. They are therefore valid words of consecration.[32] **By virtue of giving that due reverence, one distances oneself from the apostate and ambiguous theology with which the NOM was introduced at the time.** The NOM may not be invalid if celebrated in this way, but the gifts of grace will undoubtedly be less than at the traditional Mass, the latest version of

32) The correct wording of the words of consecration is extremely important without which there is no transsubstantiation. The intention is equally important. If that were not the case it would become a magical formula, a kind of Tibetan prayer wheel.

which is that of 1962, still essentially a Tridentine Mass. It should not be overlooked that the NOM was ratified by a legitimite pope, which aligns with Jesus' Word in Mathew 18:18: *"Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in Heaven."*

Of no small importance in the discussion of the validity of the NOM are the Eucharistic miracles that have occurred at celebrations according to that model in many places around the world. To name a few: in 1996 there was a very remarkable Eucharistic miracle in Buenes Aires involving Cardinal Bergoglio; in 1999 there was a Eucharistic miracle in Lourdes, witnessed by many; in Dec. 2013 a Eucharistic miracle took place in Legnica, Poland; in Nov. 2015 there was a Eucharistic miracle in Kearns in the United States; in Febr. 2016 there was a Eucharistic miracle in Anpka in Nigeria.

Regarding the validity of the NOM regarding the miracle of transsubstantiation, I refer to important prophets since its introduction, such as JNSR, who directly or indirectly endorse its validity. To dispell any doubts, here is a quote from the Book of Truth given on Maundy Thursday, April 5, 2012:

> «« Before I was crucified I attended a very important Passover Supper with my Apostles the night before my Death on the Cross. This Last Supper provides another special gift: the gift of celebrating the Holy Eucharist is a sacrament of love to provide you with a unique gift where you can truly receive Me in Holy Communion. My true Presence – contained in the Holy Eucharist in the world today when celebrated during Holy Mass – provides very special graces to those in a state of grace, who love Me, who receive Me. My Presence can be felt in a way which will strengthen your faith **when you accept my True Presence in the Holy Eucharist**. If you reject my Presence in the Holy Eucharist you reject one of the most significant gifts I left behind when I came to earth to atone for your sins. »»

As for the intention of the celebrant, this has always been extremely important. If it is missing, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass could be invalidated, taking into account that in this intention the faithful also participate, who, as scribe understands, can compensate for the lack of zeal by the priest. I now quote Pope Innocent III (De Sacro Altaris Mysterio 3:6): *"Not only do the priests offer the sacrifice, but also all the faithful: for what the priest does personally by virtue of his ministry, the faithful do collectively* ***by virtue of their intention****."* Saint Robert Bellarmine (1542-621) says: *"The sacrifice is principally offered in Persona Christi. Thus the oblation that follows the consecration is a sort of attestation that the whole Church* ***consents in the oblation made by Christ and offers it along with Him****."* (De Missa 1:27)

I also quote Pope Pius XII from his Encyclical Mediator Dei, 1947 (§ 87-88, 92-93):

> «« The rites and prayers of the Eucharistic Sacrifice signify and show no less clearly that the oblation of the Victim is made by the priests 'in company with the people'. For not only does the sacred minister, after the oblation of the bread and wine when he turns to the people, say the significant prayer: *"Pray brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty"*, but also the prayers by which the divine Victim is offered to God are generally expressed in the plural form: and in these it is indicated more than once that the people also participate in this august Sacrifice inasmuch as they offer the same. (…) Nor is it to be wondered at, that the faithful should be raised to this dignity. By the waters of baptism, as by common right, Christians

are made members of the Mystical Body of Christ the High Priest, and by the 'character' which is imprinted on their souls, they are appointed to give worship to God. **Thus they participate, according to their condition, in the priesthood of Christ**.

(…) For this highly important subject, lest a dangerous mistake be avoided, it is necessary that we know here the exact meaning of the word 'sacrifice'. The unbloody immolation at the words of consecration, when Christ is made present upon the altar in the state of a victim, is performed by the priest and by him alone, as the representative 'of Christ' and not as the representative of the faithful. This happens because it is the priest who places the Divine Victim upon the altar by which he offers it to God the Father as an oblation for the glory of the Blessed Trinity and for the good of the whole Church [and for those who do not yet belong to the Church]. Now the faithful participate in the oblation, understood in this limited sense, after their own fashion and in twofold manner: namely, because they not only offer the Sacrifice by the hands of the priest, **but also, to a certain extent, in union with him**. It is by reason of this participation that the offering made by the people is also included in liturgical worship.

(…) **The conclusion that the people offer the Sacrifice with the priest himself is 'not' based on the fact that, being members of the Church no less than the priest himself, they perform a visible liturgical rite; for this is the privilege only of the minister who has been divinely appointed to this office: rather it is based on the fact that the people unite their hearts in praise, impetration, expiation and thanksgiving with the prayers or intention of the priest, even of the High Priest himself, so that in the one and same offering of the Victim and according to a visible sacerdotal rite, they may be presented to God the Father**. »»

The logical inference is that those present at Holy Mass can, by their intentions through the High Priest Jesus Christ, inscribe the Sacrifice of the Mass in the Single Sacrifice of the Cenacle. And thus in Persona Christi the miracle takes place, even if the celebrant should have a totally wrong intention or none at all, even not the beginning of an intention. It seems reasonable to assume that the intention of the churchgoer(s) can make up for the priest's failure for the miracle to take place. Let's face it, the priestly intention will almost always be imperfect and that applies a forteriori to the churchgoers. But that is also the case with another sacrament, Confession, in which the confessor will be forgiven with imperfect contrition, if the priest gives his absolution and the confessor has the firm intention to mend his ways and if he has not concealed any sins at his Confession out of a sense of shame. If the celebrant did not celebrate in Persona Christi, most of the Eucharistic celebrations would be invalidated (this also applies to the Tridentine Mass), due to minor or major sins of the celebrant and due to a far from perfect intention by him and the faithful.

It is thus that we may conceive of the words just quoted in the Book of Truth: *"My Presence can be felt in a way which will strengthen your faith* ***when you accept my True Presence in the Holy Eucharist****. If you reject my Presence in the Holy Eucharist you reject one of the most significant gifts I left behind when I came to earth to atone for your sins."*

Ad majorem Dei gloriam !!

APPENDIX 3

Message 422 from the Book of Truth

New ways to administer my Holy Eucharist, which are insulting.

Monday, May 7th 2012, 06:19 PM

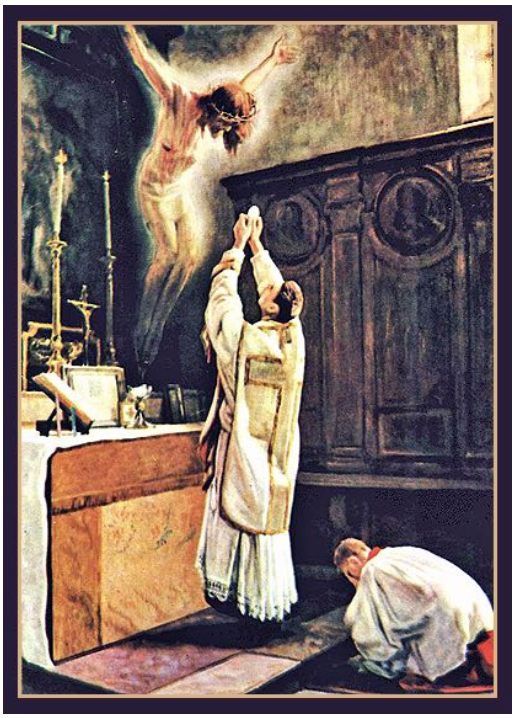
My dearly beloved daughter, to My churches through the world I say this:

Know that I will always be with you at your side as long as your proclaim my Most Holy Word. To my Catholic Church, even though you caused torment as a result of evil sin know that I will never forsake you, although you have sinned.

But know this:

Your faith in Me is not as strong as it should be. You do not love Me as you once did. All the wealth you accumulated put a distance between Me, your Christ and Savour and God's ordinary children. You scaled such lofty heights that I could not reach up to you and offer you my hand to salvage you from the rot within your core.

You were taught the truth by my Peter upon whose rock you were built. And what did you do? You built thick stone walls around you. This caused a lack of communication with those whom you needed to feed with my Body and Blood so that their souls could be nourished.



The respect required of you in administering my Most Holy Eucharist was lost when you demeaned my Presence.

When Vatican II declared new rules they were introduced by those evil Masonic forces from within your corridors. They cunningly presented new ways to administer my Holy Eucharist which are insulting to Me.

Your so called tolerant teachings proclaimed a series of lies including the refusal to acknowledge the power of St Michael the Archangel. He is the protector of the Church against Satan. Those forces among you knew this. This is why you stopped all prayers requesting his help before Mass.

Then you perpetrated the biggest untruth that Hell was not to be feared. That it was just a metaphor. For this lie, accepted as the truth by many of God's children, has meant the loss of billions of souls.

How you offend Me. For those humble and sacred servants among you I ask that you go back to my Teachings.

Never allow riches to accumulate amongst you and think that they are acceptable in my eyes. Riches, gold and power accumulated in my Name will be your downfall. You cannot profit from my Holy Word.

You have suffered because of the way you have offended Me.

Never think that I am blaming the many Holy Popes who have sat in the Seat of Peter. Their mission has always been protected. Many Popes have been prisoners in the Holy See, surrounded by Masonic groups who do not represent God.

They hate God and have spent fifty years spreading untruths about the Mercy of God. Their works have led to the collapse of the Catholic Church. This was not an accident. It was deliberately and cunningly plotted in order to destroy the faith of the Church. To destroy the homage of ordinary Catholics to the one true God.

For this you will now be cast aside into the wilderness. After Pope Benedict you will be led by Me from the Heavens.

Oh how you have made Me weep.

I call on all of my sacred servants who know the truth to stand up and follow Me, your Jesus, to spread the truth of my Teachings in humble servitude. You must find the courage and the strength to rise from the ashes.

Above all, reject the lies which will shortly be presented to you by the False Prophet [the next Pope]. He will merge the Catholic Church with other churches, including pagan churches, to become one abomination. A “One World Church” without a soul.

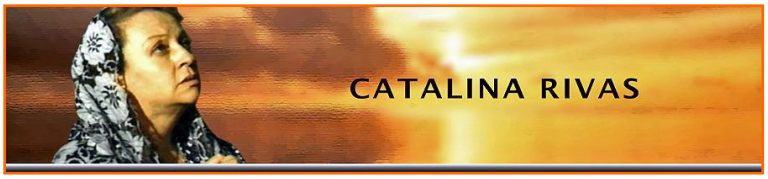
Your Jesus

APPENDIX 4

What is the Right Intention during Holy Mass?

Excerpts from the booklet: "The Holy Mass, explained to Catalina by Jesus and Mary", with imprimator by Monseigneur José Barahona C. El Salvador - San Vicente, March 2nd 2004. An Imprimator on the first part of her more extensive writings was given in 1998 by Monseigneur René Fernandez Apaza, the Archbisshop of Cochabamba in Bolivia.

Catalina Rivas of Cochabamba, Bolivia, who received these messages, now dwells in Mexico. Daniel Gagnon, OMI, of the Commission for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Archdiocese of Mexico, wrote about this booklet: *"I do not find anything against the faith or the customs of the Church. It is not my function to confirm its supernatural character; nevertheless, I recommend it for its spiritual inspiration."* Her Messages started in the first half of 1990 and have been published in 8 parts in 1998. (www.loveandmercy.org)



EXCERPTS OF THE WORDS OF THE VIRGIN MARY AND OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

The Most Holy Virgin Mary says:

"Why must you all arrive at the last moment? You should have arrived earlier to be able to pray and ask the Lord to send his Holy Spirit that He may grant you a spirit of peace and cleanse you of the spirit of the world, your worries, your problems, and your distractions so as to enable you to live this so sacred a moment. However, you arrive almost when the celebration is about to commence, and you participate as if it is an ordinary event, without any spiritual preparation. Why? This is the greatest of Miracles. You are going to live the moment when the Most High God gives his greatest gift, and you do not know how to appreciate it.

I want you to be attentive to the readings and to all of the homily of the priest. Remember that the Bible says that the Word of God does not return without bearing fruit. If you are attentive, something from all that you heard will remain in you. You should try to recall, all day long, those Words that left an impression on you. It may be two verses, other times the reading of the entire Gospel, or perhaps only one word. Savor them for the rest of the day, and it will then become part of you, because that is the way to change one's

life, by allowing the Word of God to transform you. And now, tell the Lord that you are here to listen, that you want Him to speak to your heart today.

(At the beginning of the Offertory:) Pray like this: 'Lord, I offer all that I am, all that I have, all that I can. I put everything into your Hands. Build it up, Lord, with the little thing that I am. By the merits of your Son, transform me, God Almighty. I petition You for my family, for my benefactors, for each member of our Apostolate, for all the people who fight against us, for those who commend themselves to my poor prayers. Teach me to lay down my heart as if on the ground before them, so that their walk may be less severe.' This is how the saints prayed; this is how I want all of you to do it.

(Not long after:) There are the Guardian Angels of the people who are offering this Holy Mass for many intentions, those who are conscious of what this celebration means. They have something to offer the Lord. Offer yourselves at this moment; offer your sorrows, your pains, your hopes, your sadness, your joys, your petitions. Remember that the Mass has infinite value. Therefore, be generous in offering and in asking. Behind the first Angels are others who have nothing in their hands; they are coming empty handed. Those are the angels of the people who are here but never offer anything; who have no interest in living each liturgical moment of the Mass. And they have no gifts to carry before the Altar of the Lord.

These are the Guardian Angels of the people who are here, but do not want to be, that is to say, of the people who have been forced to come here, who have come out of obligation, but without any desire to participate in the Holy Mass. The angels go forth sadly because they have nothing to carry to the Altar, except for their own prayers.

Do not sadden your Guardian Angel. Ask for much, ask for the conversion of sinners, for peace in the world, for your families, your neighbors, for those who ask for your prayers. Ask, ask for much, but not only for yourselves, but for everyone else.

Remember that the offering which most pleases the Lord is when you offer yourselves as a holocaust so that Jesus, upon his descent, may transform you by his own merits. What do you have to offer the Father by yourselves? Nothingness and sin. But the offering of oneself united to the merits of Jesus, that is an offering that is pleasing to the Father.

(When the moment of Consecration arrived Catalina noticed with her spiritual eye behind the officiating Archbishop a number of persons:) These are all the Saints and the Blessed of Heaven, and among them are the souls of your relatives who already enjoy the Presence of God. It surprises you to see me standing a little behind Monsignor (the Archbishop), does it not? This is how it should be… With all the love that my son gives me (the Virgin Mary), He has not given me the dignity that He gave the priests as to be able to perform the daily Miracle with my hands as is done with their priestly hands. Because of this, I feel a deep respect for priests and for the miracle that God carries out through them, which compels me to kneel here behind them.

(Then she saw a number of vale grey figures:) These are the blessed souls of Purgatory, who await your prayers to be refreshed. Do not stop praying for them. These poor souls will plead for you in return, but they cannot pray for themselves. It is you who have to pray for them, in order to help them depart so that they can be with God and enjoy Him eternally.

Now you now see it; I am here all the time. People go on pilgrimages, searching for the places where I have appeared. This is good, because of all the graces that they will receive there. But during no apparition, in no other place, am I more present than during the Holy Mass. You will always find me at the foot of the Altar where the Eucharist is celebrated; at the foot of the Tabernacle, I remain with the angels because I am always with Him."

Now follows a description of Catalina's vision at the very moment of the Sanctus: "To see that beautiful countenance of the Mother at that moment of the words 'Holy, Holy, Holy…' as well as all the others with their radiant faces, with hands joined, awaiting that Miracle which repeats itself continuously, was to be in Heaven itself. And to think there are people who can, at that moment, be distracted in conversation… It hurts me to tell you, many men, more than women, stand with their arms crossed, as if paying homage to the Lord as one equal to another." The Virgin Mary said: "Tell all people that never is a man more human then when he bends his knees before God!"

Catalina describes her vision: "The celebrant said the words of the Consecration. He was a person of normal height, but suddenly, he began to grow, becoming filled with light, a supernatural light between white and gold that enveloped him and grew very strong around the face. And because of it, I could not see its features. When he raised the Host, I

saw his hands, and on the back of his hands, he had some marks from which emanated a great deal of light. IT WAS JESUS! It was Him who was wrapping his Body around the celebrant, as if He were lovingly surrounding the hands of the Archbishop. At that moment, the Host began to grow and became enormous, and upon it the marvelous face of Jesus appeared looking at his people."

By instinct, I wanted to bow my head, and Our Lady said: "Do not look down. Look up to view and contemplate Him. Exchange your gaze with His, and repeat the prayer of Fatima: 'Lord, I believe, I adore, I trust, and I love You. I ask pardon for those who do not believe, do not adore, do not trust, and do not love You. Forgiveness and Mercy…' Now tell Him how much you love Him, and pay your homage to the King of Kings."

The description continues: "Thereafter the Archbishop said the words of the Consecration of the wine and, as the words were being said, lightning appeared from the heavens and in the background. The walls and ceiling of the church had disappeared. All was dark, but for that brilliant light from the Altar.

Suddenly, suspended in the air, I saw Jesus crucified. I saw Him from the head to the lower part of the chest. The cross beam of the Cross was sustained by some large, strong hands. From within this resplendent light, a small light, like a very brilliant, very small dove, came forth and flew swiftly all through the Church. It came to rest on the left shoulder of the Archbishop, who continued to appear as Jesus because I could distinguish his long hair, his luminous wounds, and his large body, but I could not see his Face. Above was Jesus crucified.

His head had sunk down upon his right shoulder. I was able to contemplate his face, violated arms and torn flesh. On the right side of his chest, He had an injury, from which blood was gushing out toward the left side, and something resembling water deviated to the right, as it was very brilliant. These were more like jets of light coming forth towards the faithful, and moving to the right and to the left. I was amazed at the amount of blood that was flowing out toward the Chalice. I thought it would overflow and stain the whole Altar, but not a single drop was spilled."

At that moment, the Virgin Mary said: "**This is the Miracle of miracles. I have said to you before that the Lord is not constrained by time and space. At the moment of the Consecration, all the assembly of those present is taken to the foot of Calvary, at the instant of Jesus' crucifixion.**"

When we were going to pray the Our Father, the Lord spoke for the first time during the celebration, and said: "Wait, I want you to pray with the deepest profundity which you can summon. At this moment, bring to mind that person or persons which have done you the greatest harm during your life, so that you embrace them close to your bosom, and tell them with all your heart: 'In the Name of Jesus, I forgive you and wish you peace. In the Name of Jesus, I ask for your forgiveness and wish my peace.' If the person is worthy of that peace, then the person will receive it, and feel better for it. If that person is not capable of opening up to that peace, then peace will return to your heart. But I do not want you to receive nor offer peace when you are not capable of forgiving and feeling that peace in your heart first."

Be careful of what you do (continued the Lord): "You repeat in the Our Father 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'. If you are capable of forgiving but not forgetting, as some people use to say, you are placing conditions upon God's forgiveness. You then actually say: 'You forgive me only to the extent that I am able to forgive, no more and no less.'"

Catalina sighs: "I do not know how to explain my pain, at the realization of how much we can hurt the Lord. And also how much we can injure ourselves by holding so many grudges, bad feelings and unflattering things that are born from our own prejudices and over-sensitivities. I forgave; I forgave from the heart, and asked for forgiveness for all the people whom I had hurt at one time or another, in order to feel the peace of the Lord."

The moment of the celebrants' Communion arrived. There I once again noticed the presence of all the priests next to the Archbishop. When he took Communion, the Virgin Mary said: "This is the moment to pray for the celebrant and the priests who accompany him. Repeat together with Me: 'Lord, bless them, sanctify them, help them, purify them, love them, take care of them, and support them with your Love. Remember all the priests of the world, pray for all the consecrated souls.'"

During the Communion of the worshippers was a woman of whom Catalina knew that went to confession just before the Holy Mass. When the Priest placed the Sacred Host on her tongue, a flash of light, like a very golden white light, went right through this person, first through her back, then surrounding her from the back, around her shoulders, and then her head. The Lord said: "This is how I Myself rejoice in embracing a soul who comes with a clean heart to receive Me."

When I went to receive communion, Jesus told me: "The Last Supper was the moment of the greatest intimacy with my own. During that hour of love, I established what could be thought of as the greatest act of lunacy in the eyes of men, that of making Myself a prisoner of Love. I established the Eucharist. I wanted to remain with you until the end of the centuries because my Love could not bear that you remained orphans, you whom I loved more than my life."

The Lord allowed me to witness the prayer of a woman: "Lord, remember that we are at the end of the month, and I do not have the money to pay the rent, the car payments, nor the children's school. You have to do something to help me… Please, make my husband stop drinking so much. I cannot bear any more his being intoxicated so often, and my youngest son will be going to repeat the year again, if you do not help him. He has exams this week… And do not forget our neighbor who must move. Let her do it right away. I cannot stand her anymore!"

Jesus said in a sad tone: "Did you take note of her prayer? Not a single time did she tell Me that she loves Me. Not a single time did she thank Me for the gift that I have given her by bringing down my Divinity to her poor humanity, in order to elevate her to Me. Not a single time has she said: 'Thank You, Lord.' It has been a litany of requests, and so are almost all of those who come to receive Me. I have died for love, and I am risen. For love I await each one of you, and for love I remain with you… But you do not realize that

I need your love. Remember that I am the Beggar of Love in this sublime hour for the soul."

When the celebrant was going to give the blessing, the Holy Virgin said: "Be attentive, take care… You make a meaningless gesture instead of a sign of the cross. Remember that this blessing could be the last one that you will receive from hands of a priest. You do not know when, leaving here, if you will die or not. You do not know if you will have the opportunity to receive a blessing from another priest. Those consecrated hands are giving you the blessing in the Name of the Holy Trinity. Therefore, make the Sign of the Cross with respect, as if it was the last one of your life."

Jesus asked me to remain with Him a few minutes more after Mass had finished. He said: "Don't leave in a hurry when Mass is over. Stay a moment in my company and enjoy it, and let Me enjoy yours. (…) All that time that you want to have Me with you. If you like talking to Me all day long and grant Me a few words during your chores, I will listen to you. I am always with you. It is you who leave Me. Once Mass has finished, so has your day of obligation. You have honored the day of the Lord and for you it's closing time. It does not occur to you that I would like to share your family life, not that day anyway!"

The other thing that the Lord spoke about with pain concerned people who encounter Him out of habit, of those who have lost their awe of an encounter with Him. That routine turns some people so lukewarm. (…) They have made their vocation an occupation to which nothing more is given, except that which is demanded of one, but without feeling.

Catalina comments: "We the laity have a very important role in our Church. We do not have the right to be silent, because the Lord has sent us out, as all the baptized, to go forth and announce the Good News. We do not have the right to absorb all this knowledge and not share it with others, and to allow our brothers to die of hunger when we have so much bread in our hands!"